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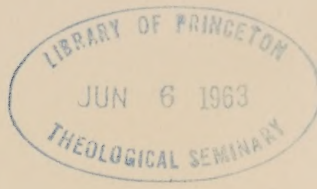






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# THE SALT OF THE EARTH

*A History of Norwegian-Danish  
Methodism in America*

By  
ARLOW W. ANDERSEN

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Asbjørn Smedstad

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Arlow W. Andersen

## JOHN J. WANG: A Tribute

SOME YEARS AGO there arrived a letter explaining what had been agreed upon in a meeting of the committee of the Norwegian-Danish Methodist Historical Society. Among those present on that

occasion in Chicago was the Reverend John J. Wang, who as historian of the former Norwegian-Danish Conference had collected and organized source material pertaining to the pioneer period particularly. A motion was passed to invite Arlow W. Andersen to collaborate with Mr. Wang in the writing of a history of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America. The work of compilation was well begun. The ensuing correspondence was marked by harmony and understand-

ing, boding well for the eventual publication. One of Wang's letters, written in longhand and dated January 15, 1958, reflects the persistent interest and enthusiasm of this 80-year-old veteran, despite much physical discomfort:

This late note will tell you why you have not heard from me. Have been sick the last 13 weeks. . . . I feel stronger now and am walking with a cane, and warm weather will soon have me outside again. . . . Your first chapter came in the first part of November, but I have not been able to read it as yet. I am happy with you in your work. God bless you! Your John.

John J. Wang was born on March 11, 1877, in Bergen, Norway. He attended the Methodist Sunday school there and came to Superior, Wisconsin, in 1893 at the age of 16. For one seeking employment in the shipyards the times could hardly have been less promising. But hard times, while breaking some men, make others. In a Swedish Methodist mission in Superior this young man accepted the lordship of Christ. His steps soon took him to Minne-

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apolis and the First Norwegian-Danish Methodist Episcopal Church, where through the encouragement of his pastor, Asle Knudsen, he applied for admission to the Norwegian-Danish Theological School in Evanston, Illinois. After his graduation in 1905 the ministerial trail led from Hutchinson, Minnesota, his first appointment, to a number of charges in the Middle West. Meanwhile, he served as conference treasurer for over 25 years.

Reverend and Mrs. Wang, the former Stena Andersen, and a cousin of Reverend J. P. Andersen, celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in Chicago in 1955, in the home of their son Harold. Reporting on this festive occasion, Harold remarks that his father's last pastorate, in the Logan Square Methodist Church (once First and Immanuel) from 1931 to 1944, was probably the most fruitful. Burdened with financial indebtedness and with a language barrier in a non-Scandinavian neighborhood, the church was dying. Under the leadership of the Wangs the financial obstacle was surmounted and a broader program of service to the community resulted in steady increases in membership. Wang's eightieth birthday anniversary was celebrated in 1957 in the church parlors.

In 1959 John J. Wang succumbed to a long illness, which had never succeeded, however, in dampening his ardor for historical pursuits. He loved to talk about the Norwegian sailors turning Quaker in British naval prisons during the Napoleonic wars, of those same sailors and their families leaving Stavanger, Norway, in search of the freer atmosphere of America, and of their early contacts with Methodists in upper New York State and in the Fox River valley of Illinois.

Wang was always eager to be of assistance in supplying information and in giving inspiration. No one will doubt his sincerity and his determination in the quest for even the smallest bit of truth. He was happiest when working with historical data, gleaned in part from the earlier findings and publications of Andrew A. Haagensen and Carl Frederick Eltzholtz. We trust that God will allow his faithful servant to employ his active mind in some such way in the life that he has entered upon.



## PREFACE

BEFORE EXPLAINING BRIEFLY how this book came to be, a few remarks concerning the beginnings of Methodism in England and in America may be appropriate. Anxiety over spiritual welfare was hardly widespread in eighteenth century England, into which came John and Charles Wesley, George Whitefield, and others to combine their efforts with those of the evangelical movement. Of John Wesley's heartwarming conversion in a Moravian meeting on Aldersgate Street in London in 1738 and of other experiences of the Wesley brothers there is hardly need to elaborate. Few remain unmoved by Charles Wesley's penetrating hymns, such as "O for a thousand tongues to sing my great Redeemer's praise!" or "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." And anyone who reads attentively William E. H. Lecky's 100-page chapter on "The Rise of Methodism" in his multi-volume history of England will never forget, among other verbal pictures, the tear-channels marking the begrimed faces of the Welsh coal miners as they listened, spell-bound and sin-convicted, to the fervent oratory of George Whitefield. As One had done nearly eighteen centuries before, Whitefield and the Wesleys took religion out of cold and tradition-bound sanctuaries and gave it to the people in the open fields.

Prior to his Aldersgate experience John Wesley had served in the new American colony of Georgia as a missionary to the Indians. George Whitefield succeeded Wesley there and spent the greater part of his remaining days in America. Further Methodist advances were achieved with the arrivals of Philip Embury and Barbara Heck in 1760, of Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore in 1769, and of Richard Wright and Francis Asbury in 1771. In the judgment of Abel Stevens, historian of early American Methodism, Asbury outdid John Wesley himself in sheer physical exertion, in dangers encountered, and in privations endured as he rode horseback through the wilderness to the frontier settlements.

The War of American Independence severed official connections of American Methodism with England. A native leadership devel-

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oped, with Thomas Cook and Francis Asbury as superintendents. At the well known Christmas conference in Baltimore in 1784 the church in America began its separate course.

The nineteenth century tide of immigrants from Europe prompted American Methodist leadership to establish missions and eventually annual conferences ministering to the needs of the foreign-born, particularly to Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. Organized in 1880, the Norwegian-Danish Conference came to an end in 1943 when complete merger was effected with the parent American Methodist Church, known until 1939 as the Methodist Episcopal Church. Norwegian-Danish congregations had been thriving in the Middle West, with Chicago as the center. Congregations fewer in number flourished in the Far West and in the East.

Through the personal subscriptions of former Norwegian-Danish Methodists and their children, and also through the strong recommendations of the membership of Asbury Church, Chicago, this volume is made possible. When the Asbury Church and parsonage were sold in 1962, the Rock River Conference voted in its annual session to allocate a fraction of the proceeds (\$3,000) to cover, in large part, the many expenses incidental to publication. The historical committee wishes to acknowledge especially the timely support of Lena Nelson and William R. Henriksen of the former Asbury Church. Together with the historical committee, the author wishes also to thank most sincerely Rev. Daniel Helikson for his services in raising a considerable sum of money in cash and pledges when promotion first got under way.

The author has been fortunate in having the sympathetic yet critical aid of others in reminding him of omissions and calling his attention to errors of fact and of judgment. Most helpful have been T. Otmann Firing, chairman of the historical committee and president emeritus of Kendall College, and Carl W. Schevenius, veteran pastor and district superintendent. These friends have given countless hours to reading the original manuscript and suggesting ways of improvement. Their intimate knowledge of events and their acquaintance with personalities stretch back to almost the turn of the century. An extended correspondence and

a stimulating interchange of views have drawn us closer together and have contributed toward a greater love and respect on the writer's part for his former administrative chief in Evanston and his onetime pastor in Minneapolis First Church. The name of Lars Marum, long active as a layman in Brooklyn's Bethelship Church, falls in the same category, particularly in matters pertaining to the origins and early development of Scandinavian Methodism in the East. Marum has searched tirelessly and methodically for documentary evidences. Martin T. Larson, now pastor in Lind, Washington, was a good source of information on certain points related to the work in the West. In that connection, the year books of the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference, obtained through Arne O. Nilsen from the collection of the late Robert P. Peterson, pastor in that conference, have made our understanding more complete.

For obvious reasons, it is impractical to attempt to recognize all who have contributed information and advice during the writing of the manuscript. Special mention should be made, however, of Dr. Theodore C. Blegen, dean emeritus of the Graduate School of the University of Minnesota and formerly managing editor of the publications of the Norwegian-American Historical Association. As the organizer of that association and the recognized authority in the field of Norwegian-American history, his patient reading of the manuscript and his expressions of satisfaction with the effort are deeply appreciated.

In a sense, this portion of immigrant and church history embraces a century, from the organization in 1843 of the first Methodist class in the Norwegian Settlement of the Fox River valley in Illinois to the official termination of the Norwegian-Danish Conference a hundred years later. While numerous persons are mentioned in the following pages, there are more whose names are missing, including many important and saintly characters. It will be noticed also that pastors have received more attention than layfolk. This apparent distortion may be explained, no doubt, by the simple circumstance that the opinions and the reports of pastors appeared more often in print. A chapter entitled "The Spirit Triumphs" is intended to bring the story up to date since



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the merger. While there is no formal bibliography, it is hoped that the footnotes and the closing "Commentary on Sources" will accommodate those who seek verification or who might wish to make further inquiry. The author is deeply indebted to Ruth Mathisen, daughter of the late Rev. Gustav Mathisen, for compiling the index, to Rev. O. C. Kahrs and Rev. C. W. Schevenius for assistance in proofreading, and to all others who have assisted in bringing this project to fulfillment, to both the living and the dead who, in the light of eternity, are one in spirit.

ARLOW W. ANDERSEN

McMurry College  
Abilene, Texas  
September 1, 1962

## *The Immigrants Meet the Methodists*

THE MASS MOVEMENT OF EUROPEANS to the United States in the nineteenth century is unparalleled in human experience. Some thirty million souls arrived, mostly from the northern and western parts of the continent. While the church of their childhood days retained a strong hold upon the immigrants in general, some responded eagerly to the newer Protestant message exemplified in American Methodism. Among them were a considerable number of Norwegians and Danes, themselves confirmed in the Lutheran faith but susceptible to a more pietistic persuasion and to a more democratic church organization.

From a small core of adherents there eventually grew an organism to be known as Norwegian-Danish Methodism, which from 1880 to 1943 enjoyed the stature of a recognized and thriving conference within the parent Methodist Episcopal Church, known simply as The Methodist Church after a three-way merger of denominations in 1939. With the increasing use of the English language in its services of worship, especially after the First World War, the advisability of continuing a distinct conference was frequently questioned. Finally the forces favoring absorption into the American Methodist conferences triumphed. The strictly missionary objective, once so commendable and effective, had been largely accomplished. Energies had been spent, with many noteworthy personal sacrifices by pastors and layfolk, in three main geographical areas: the Middle West, the Atlantic seaboard, and the Pacific Coast. From its nearly 150 congregations by 1914, totalling many thousands of members, had arisen a formidable body of Christians, whose witness by word and deed redounded to the glory of God.

The problem of determining origins is often difficult of solution. The naïve person who believes that the earth rests upon the back of an elephant may explain, when prodded further, that the

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elephant's legs go all the way down. Such credulity can be of no help in the search for fundamentals. In a survey of the Methodist impact upon immigrants from the Scandinavian lands the question ought to be raised whether any seed had been sown in Europe prior to the departure of the America-minded folk. A discussion of this matter seems to be more fitting at the point where religious dissenters sparked the beginnings of Methodism in Norway and Denmark. Hence, the European background will be considered briefly at the conclusion of this chapter.

Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America had no single origin. One source, the earliest, is discernible in a Norwegian Quaker colony of 1825 which, to a large degree, turned Methodist in New York State and continued to worship with Methodists after their journey to Illinois. Other beginnings may be traced to personalities who came under the influence of frontier Methodism in various places in the 1830's and 1840's. A third source of Norwegian-Danish activity, particularly along the Atlantic seaboard, was the seamen's missions of the 1840's. Outstanding among these harbor light havens was the Bethel Ship (later Bethelship), located in New York harbor.

Some Quaker success in winning Norwegians and Danes from the established Lutheran Church began before 1814 in Europe. During the Napoleonic wars Great Britain, struggling for her very existence, confiscated the vessels and cargoes and interned the crews of nations allied with the great Corsican. Among those who ran afoul of British maritime depredations were the seafaring Danes and Norwegians. Denmark was in alliance with Napoleon, and Norway was at that time united with Denmark.

To the prison hulks in the Thames River came English Quakers, intent upon ministering spiritually to the needs of some 2,700 Norwegian and Danish sailors.<sup>1</sup> Presently a few converts

<sup>1</sup> Andreas Seierstad, *Kyrkjelegt Reformarbeid i Norig i Nittande Hundreaaret* (Reform Work of the Church in Norway in the Nineteenth Century) (Bergen, Norway, 1923), 219 ff. Henry J. Cadbury, "First Norwegian Contact with Quakerism," in *Harvard Theological Review*, volume 34 (1941), 14 ff. Anna L. Littleboy, "Quaker Embassies a Century Ago," in *Friends Quarterly Examiner*, volume 53 (London, March, 1919), 43-49. Rufus Jones, *Later Periodicals of Quakerism* (New York, 1921), volume 2, page 822. John F. Hanson, *Light and Shade from the Land of the Mid-*



were meeting in silent worship in the manner of the Society of Friends three times a week. With the coming of peace the Quaker doctrine penetrated Norway through the released prisoners. Norwegian national independence also came, on the 17th of May, 1814, when Norway adopted a constitution of its own making and voluntarily united with Sweden under one king. It had been the purpose of the great powers to punish Denmark and to reward Sweden by transferring Norway from Danish to Swedish rule, Denmark having aided Napoleonic France while Sweden had supported Great Britain.

When ecclesiastical authorities in Norway decreed that Quakers were a menace to the nation, a small band of Stavanger folk formed a stock company in 1821 for the purpose of emigrating to America. Their America dream became a reality with the return of Cleng Peerson, the Quaker scout, whose name is familiar to every student of Norwegian immigration. The first organized body of emigrants left the port of Stavanger on July 4, 1825, on the sloop *Restaurationen* (The Restoration), and arrived in the new world after 97 days.<sup>2</sup>

When the Sloopers dropped anchor in New York harbor on October 9th they encountered unexpected difficulties. Since they had violated the laws of the United States by overloading the ship, both vessel and cargo were seized, a heavy fine was assessed, and crew and passengers were held in custody. Befriended by the Quakers in the great metropolis, however, the pilgrims from Norway appealed their case to President John Quincy Adams, who proved to be personally interested in them and granted them a pardon on November 15th.<sup>3</sup>

Adams, who had served in diplomatic posts in several European countries prior to becoming chief executive, was well informed of the situation in northern Europe. While serving as peace com-

*night Sun* (Oskaloosa, Iowa, 1903), 30 and 34. Knut Gjerset, *History of the Norwegian People* (New York, 1927), volume 2, 414 ff. Sigmund Skard, *The Voice of Norway* (New York, 1944), 193.

<sup>2</sup> Andreas Seierstad, 214 and 232. Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: the American Transition* (Northfield, Minnesota, 1940), 592 ff.

<sup>3</sup> Rasmus B. Anderson, *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration, 1821-1840; Its Causes and Results*, 61. (Madison, Wisconsin, 1895) Theodore C. Blegen, *American Transition*, 601 ff.

missioner at Ghent in Belgium at the conclusion of the War of 1812 he deplored, in a letter to his wife, the changed attitude of Sweden and the recent acts of King Charles John Bernadotte against Norway.<sup>4</sup> Twice did Adams indirectly shape the destiny of Scandinavian Methodism in America. First, he pardoned the Quaker arrivals of 1825. Second, he invoked the Monroe Doctrine in confiscating a Swedish warship which had been sold to the state of Colombia. Thus he changed the direction of the life of at least one crew member, Olof Gustaf Hedström, who was to assume the leadership of the Scandinavian Bethel Ship in 1845. Through the strange workings of providence these acts of Adams contributed in a measure toward the founding of Swedish Methodism in America and of Norwegian-Danish Methodism along the Atlantic seaboard.<sup>5</sup>

It is a significant coincidence that the pilgrims of the Norwegian Mayflower made their penetration into New York State at the very time when the Erie Canal was being formally opened. While Governor DeWitt Clinton and his party were negotiating the distance from Buffalo to New York City over the new route, the Norwegians were being transferred from a Hudson River steamer to a canal barge at Albany, the eastern terminus of the canal. "A novel sight," commented the *Albany Patriot* of October 24, 1825. "The Norwegian immigrants that lately arrived in a small vessel at New York passed through the city on their way to their destination. They appeared to be quite pleased with what they see, if we may judge from their good-humored countenances. Success to their efforts in the asylum of the oppressed!"<sup>6</sup> From a side spur of the

<sup>4</sup> "Of Sweden, which I had seen in its happier and better days, I would willingly lose the memory. . . . The national character has undergone a revolution more disgusting than that of its government. A close alliance with Russia, a French soldier of fortune supplanting the children of Gustavus Vasa, the hereditary successor to the throne, and the lust of conquest corroding every heart for the acquisition of Norway, has so totally corrupted, perverted, and debased every Swedish natural sentiment that there is no room left for any just or generous feeling." Worthington C. Ford, editor, *Writings of John Quincy Adams*, volume 2, 343 ff. and volume 5, 275 ff. (New York, 1913-1917, 7 volumes).

<sup>5</sup> Olof G. Hedström, First Quarterly Report, *Missionary Advocate* (August, 1846). The *Missionary Advocate* was published monthly by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, located in New York, from 1845 to 1876.

<sup>6</sup> Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter*, 72 ff.

new waterway the Sloopers witnessed the flotilla of dignitaries gliding eastward for the opening celebration.<sup>7</sup> Unwittingly perhaps, these exiles from Norway played the part of pioneers in the westward trek that day. Thousands of refugees and homeseekers were to follow them.

From more than one standpoint the Sloopers were an unusual lot. The majority of immigrants from European lands in subsequent years were to come to the land of promise for economic reasons. So likewise was the bulk of the Norwegians of later decades. But the Quakers, like the English Puritans of the Plymouth colony, sought freedom to worship in accordance with their convictions. In America they found a refuge from intolerant religious officialdom and a welcome absence of sharp class distinctions.

The Norwegian Friends made their homes in the midst of an American Methodist community on the shores of Lake Ontario, in the northwest corner of Kendall township in Orleans County, New York. Yankee Methodists, having battled earlier with the wilderness themselves, sympathized with their new neighbors and took them into their homes. The newcomer children attended school and learned the English language, their parents found employment with the Americans, and when the circuit rider came on his bi-weekly appointment the immigrants went along to hear him. In this region the Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church had been organized in 1810. Now Norwegians were making their first acquaintance with Methodism, a contact which would lead eventually to a denominational unit of their own in the Middle West.<sup>8</sup>

When the Black Hawk War came to an end in 1832 the Illinois

<sup>7</sup> Orsamus Turner, *History of the Holland Purchase*, 61 (Buffalo, New York, 1849).

<sup>8</sup> For a recent discussion of land holdings of the Sloopers in Kendall township see Richard Canuteson, "A Little More Light on the Kendall Colony," in *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, vol. 18 (1954), 82-101. Henry Boehm, *Reminiscences, Historical and Biographical*, 298 and 302 (New York, 1865); edited by Joseph B. Wakeley. Arad Thomas, *Pioneer History of Orleans County*, 271 (Albion, New York, 1871). See also Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter*, p. 90, for a letter dated February 28, 1895, from Anna Danielson of Kendall, New York, to the author, Rasmus B. Anderson. Mrs. Danielson was the daughter of Ole Johnson, a Sloopier.

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country was more safely opened to settlement. Multitudes streamed toward the world's richest farm land. Cleng Peerson, the tireless Quaker scout, was again sent out, this time to LaSalle County, Illinois. Once more the Stavanger folk would make their homes in a strongly Methodist community. It was Joseph Fellows, one of the Methodists of Kendall township, New York, who directed the Norwegians to government land in the Fox River valley. Peerson himself was enamored of the unsettled Illinois country and induced many of his fellow Norwegians to move in that direction. Within a few years the Sloopers folk had virtually abandoned the Kendall area.<sup>9</sup>

In 1834 Peerson led the first part of his countrymen, six Norwegian families, into Illinois, bringing them to a halt in the town of Mission. They made camp at a spring to which Peerson had been attracted on a previous visit and on soil to which he had made legal claim through registration at Vandalia, then the state capital. In the following years more Sloopers and their progeny came, staking their claims in turn and building their simple cabins around Peerson's spring. The first post office address was Middle Point, but to the Americans it became known as the Norwegian Settlement.<sup>10</sup>

Methodist activities in LaSalle County had begun in the 1820's with the coming of Jesse Walker, said to be the first white man to inhabit the Fox River valley. In 1823 he was appointed by the Missouri Conference as a missionary to the Indians in the valley. He organized a class of white people at Mission Point.<sup>11</sup> With the

<sup>9</sup> Knud Langeland, *Nordmaendene i Amerika; Nogle Optegnelser om de Norskes Udvandring til Amerika*, 18 (Chicago, Illinois, 1888). Peerson's niece, Mrs. Sarah Nelson Peterson, wrote, "My uncle Peerson read and heard much of the lovely country out west, and he resolved to go and see for himself. He came back with such glowing description that all got the emigration fever and moved west. Joseph Fellows also owned land out there." Anderson, *First Chapter*, 182. Canuteson identifies Fellows as an agent for the Pulteney estate, with an office in Geneva, New York. *Studies and Records*, vol. 18 (1954), p. 82. For an excellent treatment see Carlton C. Qualey, "The Sloopers Go West," in *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*, 17-39 (Northfield, Minnesota, 1938).

<sup>10</sup> Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860*, 62 (Northfield, Minnesota, 1931).

<sup>11</sup> Walker's first report to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, October 25, 1825, pp. 7 and 36. Also E. W. Hicks, *History of LaSalle County, Illinois*, volume 2, p. 162 (Aurora, Illinois, 1877).



arrival of the "shouting Methodist," Anna Green Pitzer, sister of John Green, who had come with his party from Ohio in 1829, Methodist influence upon the Norwegian immigrants took a new turn. To them she was the nearest neighbor. Several of her ten children married Norwegians, and some of her descendants became members of the Norwegian-Danish Conference that was eventually founded within American Methodism.

The Peerson-led Norwegians who reached the Fox River settlement joined the Methodists in their worship. Possibly few of the new arrivals had become deeply immersed in Quakerism.<sup>12</sup> In 1836 their numbers were augmented by the arrival of "Norden" and "Den Norske Klippe," with a combined total of 167 passengers, most of whom gravitated toward the Fox River valley. The second wave of immigrants were even less inclined toward the teachings of the Society of Friends. Numerous marriages between the Norwegians and their Methodist neighbors were consummated.

The Fox River community was the cradle of several religious movements.<sup>13</sup> There the pietistic Elling Eielsen, a Lutheran lay preacher, began to evangelize in 1839 and built the first Norwegian Lutheran meeting house in America. There too Hans Valder laid the groundwork for the Norwegian Baptist church in 1844. In the same valley Gudmund Haugaas organized a Norwegian society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, more familiarly known as Mormons. With disappointment Johannes W. C. Dietrichson, the first ordained Lutheran preacher to arrive from Norway, summed up his observations on the religious complexion of the settlement:<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Carlton C. Qualey describes Lars Larsen as "the only avowed Quaker in the party," others being Quaker sympathizers. Larsen moved not to Illinois but to Rochester, New York, 35 miles from Kendall township, where he followed his trade of carpenter. See Qualey, *Norwegian Settlement in the United States*, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of religious and other aspects of the colony see Carlton C. Qualey, "The Fox River Norwegian Settlement," in the *Journal of the Illinois Historical Society* (July, 1934; volume 27), 133-177 (Springfield, Illinois).

<sup>14</sup> Olaf M. Norlie, *History of the Norwegian People in America* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1925), 161. Christopher O. Brohaug and J. Eisteinsen, *Elling Eielsen's Liv og Virksomhed* (Elling Eielsen's Life and Work) (Chicago, Illinois, 1883), 60-66; Eielsen found the same denominational confusion there in 1839. Urias John Hoffman, *History of LaSalle County, Illinois* (Chicago, Illinois, 1906), volume 2, page

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In the latter part of April, 1845, I made a trip to the Fox River colony, not in the hope of correcting anything in regard to church affairs, since I had already been informed through reliable sources that the religious confusion among the Norwegians there was great, but that I could see with my own eyes and be convinced of the actual situation. It was clearly demonstrated to me what happens when no help comes from the Church in the Fatherland. Our dear countrymen, who through Holy Baptism had been received into the bosom of the Church, are now forsaking the faith of their fathers and, with a few exceptions, have been torn and sundered into different sects: Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Eielsen's followers, Quakers, and Mormons.

The Fox River community witnessed the formation of the first Norwegian Methodist class, in which the members prayed and testified in their pioneer homes. After the organization of the Rock River Conference in 1840 they found themselves within its boundaries. When Solomon Denning began to ride the Milford circuit within the new conference in 1843, the Norwegian Settlement was one of his appointments. Denning thereby became the first Methodist preacher to an organized body of Norwegians in America.<sup>15</sup>

A second source of Norwegian-Danish Methodism is discernible in the personal efforts of certain pioneers, both lay and clerical, in the Middle West. First to be ordained to specific service to Norwegians and Danes in America was Christian B. Willerup, baptized Christian Edward Balthor Willerup. Born in Copenhagen in 1815, he arrived in the United States at an early age. At 17 he was teaching school in Savannah, Georgia. There he experienced conversion and joined the Methodist Church, not later than 1838. He obtained a local preacher's license. After a year abroad in his

414. Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter*, 105. Andrew Jensen, *History of the Scandinavian Mission* (Salt Lake City, Utah, 1927), 2 and 4. Johannes W. C. Dietrichson, *Emigrant Erindringer* (Emigrant Memories), cited by Rasmus B. Anderson in *First Chapter*, p. 428.

<sup>15</sup> Solomon Denning is quoted as follows in A. D. Field's *Worthies and Workers of the Rock River Conference* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1896), 178: "The conference of 1843 was held at Dubuque, Bishop Andrews presiding, and the appointment read for Milford circuit. The territory included from five miles east of Ottawa on to Plainfield, between the Fox and Illinois Rivers. We preached at Plainfield, Plattville, Morris, Milford, Newark, Norwegian Settlement, Oswego, and at many other places in the intervening territory." According to E. W. Hicks (*History of LaSalle County, Illinois*, volume 2, page 192), the name Milford was later changed to Millington.

native Denmark, 1846-47, during which he married, he made his home in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. He became a successful business executive. Ordained as a local deacon, he assisted his pastor on a large circuit and was eventually recommended for the traveling ministry in the Philadelphia Conference. He was later received on probation in the Genesee Conference, prior to being transferred in 1850 to the Wisconsin Conference, under whose auspices he served as a missionary to the Norwegians in Dane County.<sup>16</sup>

Another pioneer, one of the founders of the Washington Prairie settlement in Winneshiek County, Iowa, was Nelson Johnson Kaasa, known simply as Nelson Johnson after dropping the farm name, Kaasa. He first made his living in the new world as a railsplitter in the vicinity of Milwaukee, thus paying for his ocean voyage. That was in 1839, when he was also paying for a farm in Yorkville Prairie, Racine County. His earliest religious experiences synchronize closely with the beginnings of Methodism in Racine.<sup>17</sup>

Methodists frequently formed the vanguard of American Protestantism in the fast-growing West. The American congregation in Racine, established in 1836, was typical of such advance. During a revival in the winter of 1841-42 at least one Dane and one Norwegian made public declaration of their purpose to live the Christian life. They were John Banks, of Danish birth, and Anna Marie Solheim, soon to marry Nelson Johnson. Johnson himself had recently undergone conversion in Milwaukee. Together he and his fiancée joined the American church in Racine in 1842. It appears that, while Banks was probably the first Dane to settle in Racine, Anna Marie Solheim was the first of her nationality to do so. Of a company of 21 immigrants, with Muskego Lake as their ultimate destination, she alone chose to remain in Racine. From

<sup>16</sup> S. N. Gaarde, "Christian Willerup, den første Danske Prest i Methodistkirken" (Copenhagen, 1915); this pamphlet is filed in the library of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois. J. M. Reid, *Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1879), volume 1, 442-450.

<sup>17</sup> J. W. Johnson in Martin Ulvestad, *Nordmaendene i Amerika, deres Historie og Rekord* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1907), volume 1, page 22. Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter*, 290-292.

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her letter to her parents in Norway, dated June 8, 1843, we quote in part: <sup>18</sup>

I have been in good health since I came to America and have had a place as a servant with an American family. I receive five dollars in salary every month. On April 26 of this year (1843) I was married to Nils (sic) Johnson Kaasa from Hitterdalen. He has been in America four years. We have bought a farm of 115 acres, and it is paid for. We have built a house and live here, 15 miles from Racine.

In America everyone has freedom to worship God according to his own convictions. More devotional meetings are held here than in Norway. This year I have seen both Americans and Norwegians receiving changed hearts, turning from their sinful ways to the true and living God. . . . How it would cheer me to hear that you have done the same and are inquiring into the condition of your souls.

Suggestive of their new loyalties was the naming of their first-born, a son, John Washington, personifying their esteem for John Wesley and George Washington. It is said that Mrs. Johnson had once been inclined toward the teachings and spirit of Hans Nielsen Hauge in Norway, and that Elling Eielsen, an admirer of Hauge, performed the baptismal rites for their infant son. A second son, Martin Nelson Johnson, achieved distinction in politics in Iowa and North Dakota. A thumbnail sketch of his career will illustrate how, in some instances, the sons of the pioneers made important contributions on America's political as well as religious frontier.

<sup>18</sup> Wesson Gage Miller, *Thirty Years in the Itinerancy* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 1875), 189; this book relates personal experiences within the Wisconsin Conference. P. S. Bennett and James Lawson, *History of Methodism in Wisconsin* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1890), 40. Elizabeth Wilson, "Methodism in Eastern Wisconsin" (Milwaukee, 1938), 30; this pamphlet is in possession of the historical society of the Wisconsin Conference. How many Danes and Norwegians were converted will never be known, since the congregational records were destroyed in a fire.

Knut Gjerset, *Norwegian Sailors on the Great Lakes: a Study in the History of American Inland Transportation* (Northfield, Minnesota, 1928), 36. Martin Ulvestad, *Nordmaendene i Amerika*, volume 1, page 22. The above excerpt from Anna Marie Solheim's letter is taken from Knut A. Rene's *Historie om Udvandringen fra Voss og Vossingerne i Amerika, med Beskrivelse og Historie af Voss, Karter og Billeder* (History of the Emigration from Voss, and the Vossings in America, with descriptions and a history of Voss, and with maps and illustrations) (Madison, Wisconsin, 1930), 197; quotation freely translated; Nelson Johnson's mother was a Vossing.



While in close touch with pioneer Methodism among the Norwegians in Washington Prairie, Iowa, Martin Johnson made the transition to the American church as a young man. After receiving the B.A. degree from Upper Iowa University in 1873 he proceeded, following an interval of teaching, to enter the law school of the University of Iowa. From that institution he received both the M.A. and the LL.B. degrees in 1876. In that year he served as Republican presidential elector. He had meanwhile been elected to the state legislature as a representative from Wineshiek County. In 1877 he was elected state senator for a four-year term.

Martin Johnson and his family moved to Petersburg in Dakota Territory in 1883. There he farmed for four years before being elected district attorney. As a delegate to the state constitutional convention at Bismarck in 1889 he chaired the committee on corporations and helped to frame legislation on public education and prohibition. In the 1890's he served four terms in the federal Congress, as North Dakota's only representative. In 1908 he was elected to the Senate. His loyalty to the Methodist Church led to his choice as a lay delegate from the North Dakota Conference to the General Conference of 1908. He died unexpectedly in a Fargo hotel on October 21, 1909.<sup>19</sup>

Memorial addresses, delivered in Congress, fittingly eulogized the deceased solon for his character and his achievements. Knute Nelson, United States Senator from Minnesota, recalled that he had known the departed when they were boys attending Sunday school in the Norwegian-Danish Methodist church in Cambridge, Wisconsin, in 1856 or 1857. He declared that Johnson's traits of fairness and candidness "did not at all times make him popular

<sup>19</sup> *Fargo Forum*, October 22, 1909. *Jamestown Alert*, October 22, 1909. W. B. Hennessy, compiler, *History of North Dakota* (Bismarck, North Dakota, 1910), 61-62. Information given to the writer by Mrs. S. M. (Nellie) Hyde, daughter of Martin Johnson, and Mrs. A. D. (Neva) MacMaster, granddaughter of Martin Johnson, both of Williston, North Dakota, in letters dated January 27, 1958. They in turn are indebted to John Washington Johnson for much information.

Mrs. Hyde writes that the Johnson family "were instrumental in establishing and building the Vincent Methodist Episcopal Church of Petersburg, North Dakota" and that from 1891 to 1899 they faithfully attended the Methodist Metropolitan Church in Washington, D.C., where President McKinley also attended.

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with a certain class of politicians." Senator Jonathan P. Dolliver of Iowa, who worked with Johnson in preparing the time-consuming Dingley Tariff of 1897, said that Johnson "did good work with scant advertisement." William R. Ellis, representative from Oregon, joined with others in citing Johnson as an example of men without fortune finding it possible to advance under the American system of government. Johnson was commended for his courage in defending the gold standard in the 1890's, defying the ever-vocal free-silverites in his own state. And William A. Calderhead of Kansas graciously stated, "It was easy to see by his manner of speech that he was one of the men who had battled with life for opportunity from his childhood up, and he had upon him the marks of that battle."<sup>20</sup>

When new land was opened for settlement west of the Mississippi Nelson Johnson, father of John and Martin, was chosen to lead a caravan from Muskego to Iowa, in May of 1850. It was in his cabin in Washington Prairie that Ole Peter Petersen, who was to become the earliest instrument of Methodism in Norway, preached his first sermon as pastor on November 10, 1851. A congregation was organized in the spring of 1852. Johnson's log cabin was probably the first Norwegian Methodist meeting house west of the Father of Waters. Johnson himself preached the gospel as a deacon for 25 years, ministering mainly to congregations in Iowa. He was seriously handicapped in the pulpit, however, by a speech difficulty resulting from two throat operations performed while he was serving Cambridge, Wisconsin, in the years 1855-57.<sup>21</sup>

Another pioneer of the Washington Prairie colony was Erik Andersen Rude. In 1839, at the age of twelve, he came with his parents from Voss in Norway. In Chicago he found employment in the home of a Methodist family, where he also earned his board

<sup>20</sup> See *Martin N. Johnson Memorial Addresses*, pp. 17, 25, 26, 52, and 56. (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1910). Addresses delivered in the Senate on April 2, 1910, and in the House of Representatives on April 24, 1910. Sixty-first Congress. Second session. This particular copy is in the possession of the Fargo Public Library.

<sup>21</sup> W. E. Alexander, *History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties*, 185 (Sioux City, Iowa, 1882). Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter*, 291. The throat operations are mentioned by Mrs. S. M. Hydle, granddaughter of Nelson Johnson, in her correspondence with the writer.

while attending school. During those four years he attended Sunday school and services of worship with his Methodist employer-friends. He joined their congregation in 1842. From this fellowship the present Chicago Temple traces its beginning.<sup>22</sup>

One of the Sloopers, Ole Olsen Hetletvedt, the first Norwegian Lutheran lay preacher in America, saw possibilities in Rude. Upon his advice the young man enrolled as a student in Beloit College in Wisconsin. In the course of time Erik learned the printer's trade and subsequently set type for the *Chicago Tribune*. He next taught in the log schoolhouse of Deerfield, Wisconsin, in Dane County, in 1848. In 1849 he was invited to Racine as printer for *Nordlyset* (The Northern Light), a Free-Soil weekly and the first strictly Norwegian newspaper in America, established in 1847.<sup>23</sup>

In the spring of 1850 Rude, then only 23 years of age, was selected to guide a company of landseekers westward across the Mississippi. This band of migrants staked their claims in Winneshie County, Iowa.<sup>24</sup> As school teacher, merchant, farmer, sheriff, and local preacher Erik Andersen Rude left his mark upon the Iowa settlement. It was he who, together with Nelson Johnson and others who had come from the Fox River settlement, requested Henry W. Reed, presiding elder of the Upper Iowa District, to appoint a man fluent in the Norwegian language to Washington Prairie. The response came in the person of Ole Peter Petersen.

A third source of Norwegian-Danish Methodism is apparent in the early ministrations of Scandinavian laymen and clergymen to sailors in New York harbor and to a more limited extent in other Atlantic seaboard ports. Through the direct influence of American Methodism men like Ole Helland, Peter Bergner, and Olof Gustaf Hedström became successful evangelists among their seafaring countrymen. Bergner and Hedström, both of Swedish descent, inspired the beginnings of Swedish Methodism in America and, in some

<sup>22</sup> Hjalmar R. Holand, *Den Sidste Folkevandring* (The Last Migration), 150 (Oslo, Norway, 1930).

<sup>23</sup> Hjalmar R. Holand, *De Norske Settlementers Historie*, 90 (Ephraim, Wisconsin, 1909). Hetletvedt and his family were members of the Congregational church in Newark, Illinois, after 1843. See E. W. Hicks, *History of LaSalle County*, 236. See also Even Skofstad, quoted in Ulvestad, vol. 1, p. 438.

<sup>24</sup> Alexander, *History of Winneshie and Allamakee Counties*, 188.

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degree, though not claiming to be the founders, gave impetus to Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the East.<sup>25</sup>

Soon after his arrival from Norway in the summer of 1836, Ole Helland, having been invited by one Frederick Nelsen, a tract-distributing Swedish friend, attended Sunday services at the Old Trinity Methodist Church of New York. Nelsen, it is said, had joined the Methodists in the South. As Helland was walking near the Battery one day, he felt the presence of God in a special way. Shortly he came under the wing of L. P. Hubbard, pastor of the Mariners Bethel Church of the same city, and he soon professed conversion. Although the 22-year-old Helland was still unable to speak English, or perhaps because of it, he became Hubbard's assistant, distributing tracts and discussing matters of the soul with Scandinavian seamen in the port city. Little is known of his activities thereafter until 1839, when he married Emma Horton, an American woman, and joined the Fourteenth Street Church of New York. In 1849 he moved to Orange County, New York, where his business interests did not prevent him from assuming leadership in the construction of a Methodist church building. In fact, the local citizen who most strenuously opposed Helland in the idea eventually donated the land for the structure. Ole Helland resumed his missionary work in New York in 1855, his services being in connection with the Bethelship. In 1858 he went west, joined the Wisconsin Conference, and served several Norwegian-Danish charges including Cambridge. His health broke under the strain of physical hardship and strenuous preaching, yet according to Victor Witting he returned to the East in 1863 and re-entered the service

<sup>25</sup> Victor Witting, *Minnen Fran Mitt Lif* (Memories From My Life) (Worcester, Mass., 1904), 135-171. N. M. Liljegren, *Svenska Metodismen i Amerika*, 166-175 (Chicago, 1895). J. M. Reid, *Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, vol. 1, pp. 429-435 (New York, 1879). For a review of Helland's life see Severin Simonsen, "Atter er en i vore Raekker falden" (Again a member of our ranks has fallen) in *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May, 1892.

Concerning the beginnings on the Atlantic coast, Dr. Abel Stevens, nineteenth century historian of Methodism, writes in correspondence with Carl F. Eltzholtz: "Despite the fact that our people (the American Methodists) have been in the habit of calling good Mr. Hedström the founder of 'Scandinavian Methodism,' you are undoubtedly correct, for he was not personally nor actually the founder of Norwegian and Danish Methodism." (Stevens to Eltzholtz, March 8, 1888, from San Gabriel, California; in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, December 1, 1910)



of the American Port Society.<sup>26</sup>

Peter Bergner, generally known as "Polyglot Peter" because of his facility in languages, attained at the University of Uppsala, came to America in 1832. He was then 35 years of age. Finding his countrymen and others without divine services, his religious upbringing prompted him to rent a one-room schoolhouse where he preached in Swedish, following the order of the Lutheran Church.<sup>27</sup> A life of devoted service resulted from his conversion. First he was granted the use of an old hulk at pier number 11, North River, where he preached for nine months. Next he approached David Terry of the Methodist Board of Missions relative to the possibility of inaugurating a mission to Scandinavian sailors. His interest being aroused, Doctor Terry himself became the inspiration of the Scandinavian mission for more than 30 years.

It had been ascertained that a vessel could be procured and that it might be berthed in the midst of Scandinavian shipping in the port. It was also known that a young man, likewise Swedish-born, might be available. For the present he was located at Plattsville, New York, within the bounds of the New York Conference. The man in question, Olof Gustaf Hedström, was born in 1803 and came to New York in 1825, where for a time he pursued his trade as a tailor. In 1829 he experienced conversion at the Willett Street Methodist Church in New York. In 1835 the New York Annual Conference admitted him on probation. Ten years later, after service in several charges, he was selected to organize the Bethel Ship mission. Among the first appointments read was "North River Mission: O. G. Hedström." Hedström conducted the first service in the Bethel Ship "John Wesley" on Sunday, May 25, 1845, with Peter Bergner aboard and with Doctor Terry stationed on the dock distributing tracts and invitations to passing sailors.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Report of the American Port Society, New York, 1856. Victor Witting, *Minnen*, 129 and 131. *Missionary Advocate*, July, 1857, p. 30, and December, 1864, p. 69.

<sup>27</sup> Reid, volume 1, p. 430, and volume 2, p. 180; *Missionary Advocate*, May, 1846.

<sup>28</sup> Witting, *Minnen*, 138 and 141; Liljegren, 155, quoting Doctor David Steed; Eric Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska Forsamlingarnas och Svenskarnas Historia i Amerika* (History of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations and of the Swedes in America), 16-24 (Rock Island, Illinois, 1890); Henry Ericsson, *Sixty Years a Builder* (Chicago, Illinois, 1940), 27; Reid, volume 1, p. 430.

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Hedström proved to be a good reporter. His copious notes and official reports are readable and valuable. A few excerpts are given. "The evidence of divine sanction is striking and abundant. It is indeed cheering to hear Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Swedes, Danes, Norwegians, Finns, and others of different nations mingling their hearts and voices in singing the songs of Zion and proclaiming in their own tongues the wonderful works of God." And again, "These are our epistles: sailors converted to God at the Bethelship, scattered over the seas and read and known of all men. . . . They go as Paul the tentmaker to carry the glad tidings of salvation in Christ. . . . May our Bethelship become the spiritual birthplace of a thousand souls!" <sup>29</sup>

Hedström declared that some 1,200 seamen visited the port of New York during the year 1850 and that 4,000 emigrants had arrived from the Scandinavian countries, principally from Norway. With the aid of his assistants he had regularly boarded the immigrant vessels, preaching to the new arrivals and dispensing some 15,000 tracts, Bibles, and New Testaments to them. On occasion he had preached on four ships in a single day.<sup>30</sup> Often his listeners came ashore and attended services in the Bethel Ship. One of these, Eric Norelius, future leader among Swedish Lutherans in America, reflected upon his experiences in this forthright fashion: <sup>31</sup>

The ship had been made into a chapel, with pulpit and benches, and the light was good. We sang from the Lutheran hymnal, and following Hedström's sermon several persons stood up and offered prayer. I thought his messages were heart-warming, but his Swedish was poor. . . . His home, where I was a guest, was substantial for that time. His wife, an American lady of the old school, was friendly and capable. In personal conversation the pastor was spiritual and not fanatical and, asked about his doctrinal belief, he did not argue but explained that if he were a Lutheran he would be "genuine" in the true sense.

That Hedström could be influential with celebrities as well as with common folk is attested by the oft-repeated story of his meet-

<sup>29</sup> *Missionary Advocate*, May 6, 1846 (first report); *Thirtieth Annual Report of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1847), 93. (New York)

<sup>30</sup> *Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1851).

<sup>31</sup> Eric Norelius, *op. cit.*, 16-26.

ing in 1851 with Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," who sought his spiritual guidance during a concert tour in the United States. Feeling the call of God to use her voice in Christian service, the world famous soprano determined after meeting Hedström that she would never again sing in a theatre. Among the many gifts that Jenny Lind bestowed upon charitable and religious enterprises was one of six hundred dollars to Hedström for missionary work among needy Scandinavians.<sup>32</sup> As "captain" of the Bethel Ship for 25 years, Hedström's name became a byword in Scandinavian homes. He died at the age of 74 in the year 1877.

No résumé of the significance of the Bethel Ship seamen's mission would be complete without an appraisal of the intimate friendship between Olof Hedström and a young Norwegian, previously mentioned, Ole Peter Petersen, the founder of Methodism in Norway. The account of Petersen's aspirations and rather turbulent experiences, both physical and spiritual, is well presented by his friend and fellow pastor, Carl Frederick Eltzholtz.<sup>33</sup>

In his adolescent years Petersen desired to devote his life to the Lutheran ministry in his native Norway. His mother had died, and he was being reared in the home of a devout Christian family, much inclined to Bible reading. When the confirmation milestone had passed, he began to contemplate the financial wall separating him from a theological education. He turned his affections toward the life of a seaman. His first sight of an American ship came in the harbor of Le Havre, France. On such a vessel he eventually

<sup>32</sup> This story of Jenny Lind appears in several sources: Witting, 168; S. B. Newman, *Sjelfbiografi* (Autobiography) (Chicago, Illinois, 1890), 86; S. G. Rosenberg, *Jenny Lind in America*, 7 (New York, 1851); Charles Kendrick Babcock, *Scandinavian Element in the United States*, 116 (Urbana, Illinois, 1914); Edward Wagenknecht, *Jenny Lind*, 144 (New York, 1931).

<sup>33</sup> Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, *Livsbilleder af Pastor O. P. Petersen, Grundlaegger af den Biskoppelige Methodistkirke i Norge og Medgrundlaegger af den Norsk-Danske Methodisme i Amerika* (Biographical Sketches of Pastor O. P. Petersen, Founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Norway and Co-founder of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America), 5-28 (Chicago, Illinois, 1903). Although this source is lacking in both annotation and bibliography, it relies upon the private papers of Petersen, which were made available to Eltzholtz by Petersen's son-in-law, Doctor Charles Henry Johnson. In a sense this volume of 364 pages is a memorial to Petersen, who died in 1901. It includes a useful preface by Andrew Haagenen, the historian of earlier Norwegian-Danish Methodism.

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landed at Boston in January, 1844. Apparently a year was spent in Boston and in New York City, where he found a good friend in one John Harris, a Norwegian with a Swedish wife.

In January, 1845, Petersen embarked on a ship in ballast, south-bound for a cargo of cotton. Two days out of Boston a severe storm all but destroyed the rigging and so shifted the ballast that the ship's rudder protruded above the water. When the winds and the waves had subsided, the young sailor, in deep sincerity, thanked God for sparing his life.

Upon returning from Charleston to New York Petersen discovered that the Harrises had become "new creatures." He proceeded to accompany John Harris three times to the Bethel Ship, where he had once heard Hedström preach. In answer to an altar call he declined to go forward, but did so at a later date. Invited to testify, he responded, "I thank God because I have had an opportunity to be here today, for tomorrow we sail. I am determined to seek God until I find him."<sup>34</sup>

While on several occasions the peace of God made itself felt peculiarly in Petersen's life during the next three years, the young sailor persisted, beyond conversion, toward the goal of complete sanctification, a goal more ardently pursued in his day than ours. In the course of his earnest seeking he attended Edward T. Taylor's Methodist seamen's mission in Boston and found there the fellowship for which he yearned. In Hedström he continued to confide, the older man considering him to be his "son in the Gospel." But of this relationship Petersen was later to say, according to his biographer, "I was neither awakened nor found peace with God under his (Hedström's) guidance. Later he was of great blessing to me."<sup>35</sup>

Not until the morning of January 28, 1849, did this pioneer of Norwegian Methodism experience the full sanctification he sought. The place was on board a merchant vessel in the harbor of Mobile,

<sup>34</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 21. For a useful biographical sketch of Edward T. Taylor, preacher at the Seaman's Bethel in Boston, see J. Rex Shepler, "Father Taylor, Apostle to Seamen," in *The New Christian Advocate*, volume 2, number 8, 59-62 (August, 1958). This publication was issued monthly, now semi-monthly, by the Methodist Publishing House, Chicago, Illinois.



Alabama.<sup>36</sup> To the twentieth century mind it seems incomprehensible that one who had undergone spiritual struggles under more congenial auspices in camp meetings near New York City, in the Bethel Ship, and elsewhere, should finally win victory over his doubts on the distant shores of the Gulf of Mexico. Yet John Wesley himself had traveled extensively and experienced many soul-searching qualms prior to the day in 1738 when he felt his heart "strangely warmed."

Upon returning to New York Petersen found a long-awaited letter from his fiancée in Norway. The news of his triumph had greatly affected her, she wrote. She had circulated his letter in the community. Many friends were expressing the hope that he would come back and be their guide to a similar state of holiness. After much thought and prayer, Petersen felt a divine call to testify of his personal victory to his former associates back home and hired out as a seaman on a returning Swedish vessel, bound for Amsterdam, on May 1, 1849. Petersen proceeded from Amsterdam to Langesund, Norway, on a Norwegian vessel and arrived in his birthplace, Fredrikstad, on June 30. All in all, the voyage consumed two months. He had been absent from his native land about five years. So concludes the first portion of Eltzholtz's biography of O. P. Petersen.<sup>37</sup>

Petersen was to find both opposition and receptivity to his heartwarming message in Norway. The antagonism of a centuries-old Lutheranism, steeped in tradition and conservatism, awaited him. On the other hand, liberating and regenerative forces were at work, particularly in the religious realm. It might be stated parenthetically that, while no direct relationship to Norwegian or Danish affairs is evident, it may be significant that the political revolutions of 1848 in several European states had resulted in a measure of success for the middle classes. The age of Metternich was over. Arch conservatism yielded to demands for political and economic reforms.

If then the question is repeated, whether the two Scandinavian

<sup>36</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 34.

<sup>37</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 39-42.

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countries were in some degree prepared for Methodist and other non-conformist doctrine and practice at the time of Petersen's arrival in 1849, the answer must almost certainly be in the affirmative. While initial Methodist gains must be credited to Petersen and other sons returning from the United States, rumblings of religious discontent had already been heard. Witness the spiritual breakthrough of Hans Nielsen Hauge in 1796, reminiscent of John Wesley and Aldersgate in 1738. The transformation effected in Hauge and his listeners by the old hymn, "Jesus, din søde forening at smage," was phenomenal.<sup>38</sup> It marked, in a sense, the inception of a puritanism that had far-reaching consequences, extending to the clergy, the university, and to society in general. In the words of Einar Molland, a church historian of our day, Hauge "awakened large segments of the Norwegian people to a personal Christianity" and "called to life slumbering powers in many spheres of life."

A movement similar to Haugeanism in its religious aspect was Grundtvigianism. Nicolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872), a prolific Danish educator and theologian, attacked rationalism in the realm of theology and exalted the "living word" above apostolic commentaries. Like Hauge, he expounded the inner life as the criterion of Christian living. His lack of personal contact with Norwegians was offset, in part, by the long and distinguished ministry of his disciple, W. A. Wexels, in Our Saviour's Church in Christiania (now Oslo). At his death in 1866 Wexels had completed 47 years of service in the one congregation, first as assistant and later as pastor. Molland speaks of him as "Norway's most influential clergyman in the 1830's, 1840's, and 1850's."<sup>39</sup>

Wexels' Grundtvigianism eventually offended the more pietistic. Contrary to the spirit of Pontoppidan's *Explanation to*

<sup>38</sup> A free translation would be "Jesus, I long for thy sweet communion." Professor Einar Molland of the University of Oslo has recently recognized the influence of Hauge and others upon religious life in Norway. However, he makes no reference to Methodist beginnings in the 1850's. Einar Molland, *Church Life in Norway, 1800-1950*, chapter 1. Translated from the Norwegian by Harris Kaasa and published by the Augsburg Publishing House (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1957).

<sup>39</sup> Molland, 29. Grundtvig apparently visited Norway only once, in 1851.

*Luther's Catechism*, a royal commission of which Wexels was a member produced in 1843 a more liberal version, in which novels, dancing, and the theatre were not denounced as sinful *per se*. Yielding to popular reaction, the government rejected the new *Explanation* for the old in 1852. If Grundtvigianism met with opposition, as it did, the fact remains that it stimulated the Christian community to assume a position for or against, thus preparing in a measure for the personal repentance preaching of Gustav Adolph Lammers in Skien in 1848 and the revival of the 1850's and 1860's inspired by Gisle Johnson, lecturer in theology at the University of Christiania. It is the judgment of Einar Molland that the Johnsonian movement surpassed the Haugean in its "broad effect upon Norwegian society and its significance for the ecclesiastical development of Norway."<sup>40</sup>

It is impossible in some matters to ascertain what is cause and what is effect. Evidence seems to point, however, to the influence of Haugeanism and of Grundtvigianism, in its religious rather than its literary aspects, upon the spiritual climate in Norway before 1850. Johnsonianism and the "prayer houses" (*Bedehuser*) affected the country in a similar way after that time. Like Methodism, Haugeanism appealed strongly to the farming and the working classes. Some pioneer Norwegian Methodists in America came from Haugean stock. Recurring waves of religious unrest, covering a period of about thirty years, had moved Norwegian governmental authorities to grant freedom of religion in 1845. Many small societies, as well as the established church, were benefitted by that decision.<sup>41</sup> Methodism would be an active agent, together with others, in the mid-century religious movement. Hence, for those who had returned from America with glowing accounts of personal redemption through association with Methodism and

<sup>40</sup> Molland, 32 ff.

<sup>41</sup> For a fuller discussion see Andreas Seierstad, *Kyrkjelegt Reformarbeid i Norig i Nittande Hundreaaret*, 316-334. A briefer reference is available in Karen Larsen, *A History of Norway*, 358 and 360 (Princeton, New Jersey, 1948).

A Norwegian scholar, Nils Bloch-Hoell, once a student of Andreas Seierstad, deals convincingly with the American origins of non-Lutheran denominational activities in Norway, in his *Pinsebevegelsen* (Oslo, 1956). His chapter four (pp. 110 ff.) discusses factors contributing to the rise of the Pentecostal movement and other movements toward the middle of the nineteenth century.

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other reformed beliefs, the way had already been prepared for further evangelization in Norway.

If it be true that not a few of the many America-bound folk had taken spiritual inventory of themselves before leaving European shores, it becomes understandable that for some the search for complete peace with God might be intensified in a new and strange country. This quest for satisfaction and certainty in spiritual matters was characteristic of the Sloopers, not content with their recently embraced Quakerism. It is of more than passing significance that they happened to dwell among Methodists both in New York State and in Illinois. Likewise, the search for inner serenity motivated men like Willerup, who encountered evangelical Protestantism head on in the American South, and Ole Helland, O. P. Petersen, and their kind, who frequented seamen's chapels along the Atlantic coast. In these ways did Norwegian-Danish Methodism have its beginnings in America.





Willerup Church,  
Cambridge, Wis.,  
Oldest Scandina-  
vian Methodist  
Church in the  
world, erected  
1852, as it appears  
today



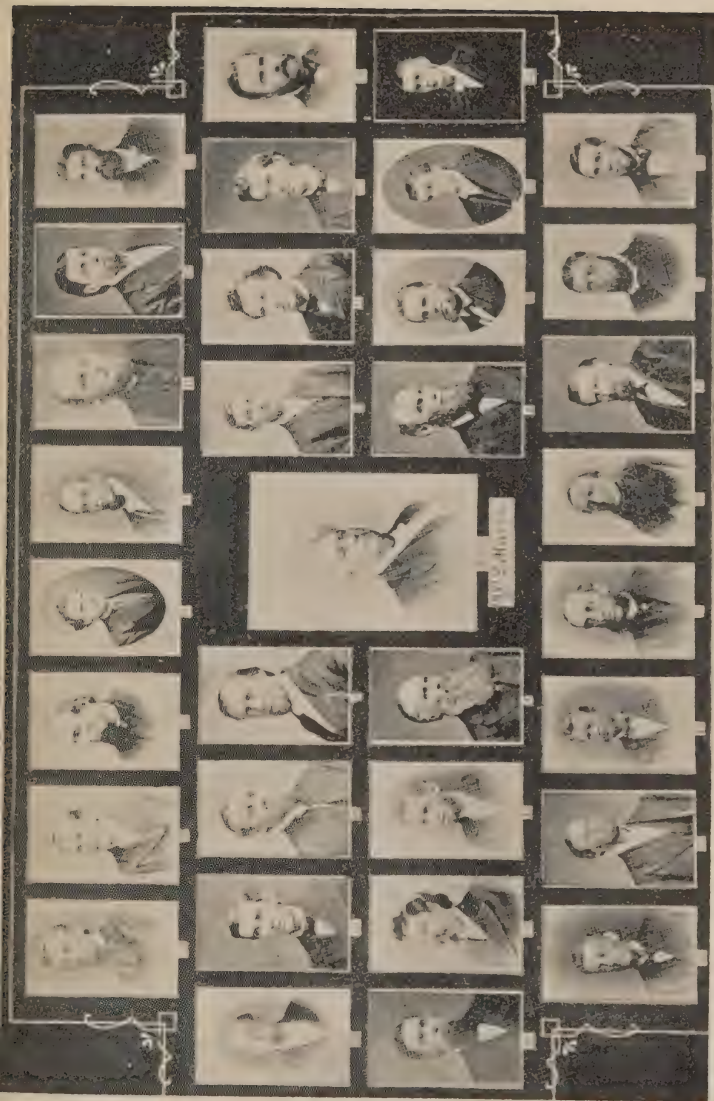
Christian B. Willerup



The First Bethelship



O. P. Petersen



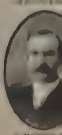
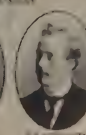
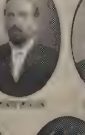
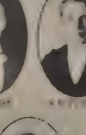
THE FIRST NORTH-WEST NORWEGIAN ANNUAL CONFERENCE, MEMBERS AND THOSE ON TRIAL  
HELD AT RACINE, WIS., IN 1880

*Top Row Left to Right:* M. Nilsen, O. L. Hansen, C. F. Eltzholtz, J. H. Johnsen, A. Olsen, B. Johansen, L. A. Larsen, A. Gustavsen.  
*Second Row:* O. T. Olsen, O. Sanaker, O. Jacobsen, O. P. Petersen, A. Haagen, Chr. Oman, J. Sanaker, N. A. Quale. *Third Row:* B. Olin, J. L. Thomsen, P. B. Smith, N. Christophersen, A. Johnsen, O. Wiersen, A. Daniels, F. W. Erickson. *Fourth Row:* W. Pihl, A. Pedersen, A. Knudsen, Chr. Treider, P. Jensen, J. Jacobsen, C. Christophersen, J. Petersen. *Center:* Bishop W. L. Harris.





# Den norsk-danske M.E. Conference.







**PASTORS OF THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE NORWEGIAN-DANISH ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
AT TRINITY CHURCH, RACINE, WISCONSIN, MAY 28-30, 1943**

*Seated left to right:* H. C. Munson, Jan O. Skagen, John Lorentz, H. K. Madsen, Fred Stone, J. M. Beckstrom, Halvard Folkstad, Gilbert Gillberts, L. F. Gulbrandsen, G. A. Eckhoff, Ottar Holstad, Edward Evensen.  
*Second row:* Olav A. Kvisgaard, Erling Edwardsen, Carl W. Schevenius, Gotthred Nelsen, Sverre Hammer, G. F. Nilsen, P. M. Peterson, Anonymous, W. E. J. Gratz, Andrew A. Stave, T. Othman Firing, O. C. Kahrs, H. A. Olstie, and Orville Kleven.  
*Third row (Scattered):* Alfred Anderson, John J. Wang, Melvin Olson, Anonymous.  
*Fourth row:* Ellis Mooney, Arne O. Nilsen, Erling B. Falck, Lee Paulson, Yngvar Johansen, David Helikson, Harry M. Peterson, Gustav Kvisgaard, Howard A. Slaatte.  
*Top row:* Gerhard Hjeltnes, Iver T. Slaatte, Anonymous, Ragnvald J. Dahl, and Asbjorn Smedstad.

## WESTERN NORWEGIAN-DANISH ANNUAL CONFERENCE



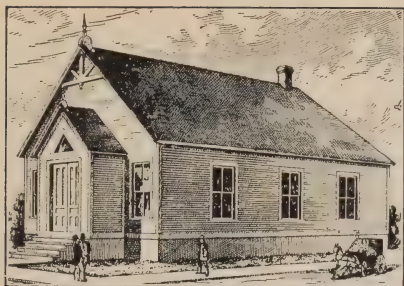
### THE MISSION CONFERENCE IN 1897, PORTLAND, OREGON

*Front row (from the left) :* O. Arvesen, C. Petersen, Grebert Andersen, H. O. Nordwick, O. Heggen, P. N. Melby. *Middle row:* C. N. Hauge, John Jacobsen, C. J. Larsen, Miss Hanson, Bishop C. C. McCabe, E. J. Lundegaard, Martinus Nelson, C. Heckner, C. Lyng Hansen, *Back row:* E. L. Nanthrup, N. L. Hansen, Carl Eriksen, O. O. Twede, E. E. Mork, C. Aug. Petersen, Joseph Olsen, Martin Hansen, J. J. Field.

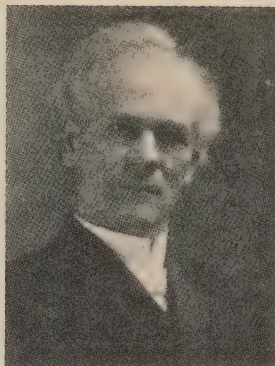


### THE WESTERN ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN 1939, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

*Front row (from the left) :* Mrs. O. B. Jansen, Mrs. K. Miller, P. A. Norleman, John Nelson, O. T. Field, H. P. Nelson, M. L. Olson, H. E. Andersen, Joseph Bowdoin, Miss Clara Anderson, Mrs. M. Solby. *Middle row:* J. G. Bringdale, D. C. Hassel, H. O. Jacobson, K. N. Ekaas, H. W. Hanson, F. Engebretsen, F. A. Scarvie, R. S. Werner, Mr. Nelsen (Eureka), O. K. Jordet. *Back row:* B. Stockland, O. Karlseng, P. Rohr, O. A. Wiggen, S. Sivertsen, S. A. Carlson, A. Odegard, G. A. Storaker. (Not in picture. Bishop James C. Baker, Rev. M. K. Skarbo and Rev. Martin T. Larson)



The first Norwegian-Danish  
Methodist Church  
west of Rocky Mountains  
at Oakland, California



Rev. C. J. Larsen



First  
Norwegian-Danish  
M.E. Ministers'  
Meeting in the  
Eastern States,  
1902





**NORWEGIAN-DANISH MISSION IN THE EASTERN STATES AUTHORIZED  
BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF 1924  
ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN BUFFALO, N.Y., OCTOBER, 1924**

*Seated, left to right:* C. F. Nilsen, Carl J. Conrad, Albert Hansen, Andrew Hansen, Bishop J. F. Berry, J. M. Beckstrom, B. E. Carlsen, Ottar Hofstad.  
*Second row:* M. Johansen, A. P. Andersen, Gottfred Hansen, John Moller, Yngvar Johansen, Anonymous, Erling Edwardsen, Joseph Swenson, W. R. Nordos, John Christoffersen, P. M. Peterson, C. J. Andersen, Lars Marum, E. T. Klein, Asbjorn Smedstad.



**Epworth League Convention, Boston, May, 1925**



## *The Pioneers Choose the Middle West*

NORWEGIANS AND DANES entered the Middle West in ever-increasing numbers in the 1840's and 1850's. The span of years preceding the Civil War found them established in Scandinavian communities and normally in Lutheran fellowships in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. Here also American Methodists met with some success in their fervent efforts to provide the bread of life to a partially uprooted immigrant population. The spirit of the nation tended toward optimism, following Uncle Sam's feather-plucking of the Mexican eagle in the Texas dispute, but an optimism resting precariously upon the makeshift barrier to further slavery extension represented in the Compromise of 1850.

Whether or not Scandinavian newcomers displayed full sensitivity toward territorial expansion and national problems, independent congregations, sometimes of mixed Swedish and Norwegian composition, came into being at the mid-century point. A quick preview would show that in southeastern Wisconsin the Cambridge charge began in 1851 with 52 members, some Danish but most of them Norwegian. In Chicago a combined Swedish and Norwegian enterprise resulted in a church, founded in 1852, with 75 official worshippers. By 1868 the two nationalities of the Chicago congregation voluntarily separated, each to form its own fellowship. In northeastern Iowa, Washington Prairie and Big Canoe (later Locust), both Norwegian-Danish in character, had their beginnings in 1852. Saint Paul claimed the distinction of providing a home for the first Scandinavian congregation of any denomination in Minnesota in 1853. In that year the Illinois communities at Fox River and Little Indian Creek (later Leland) advanced beyond the weekly class meeting (*klassemöte*) stage into full-fledged communions, having contributed meanwhile to

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

the rise of Methodist missions among their countrymen in Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Prior to formal organization, services of prayer and testimony were conducted in borrowed quarters or private homes. One reads of Norwegian union meetings of Baptists, Methodists, and low-church Lutherans in the Fox River country. Here Elling Eielsen, a Haugean lay preacher, arrived from Norway in 1839. After ministering to his countrymen in the Fox River valley of Illinois, the largest Norwegian colony of the time, he was ordained into the Lutheran ministry in 1843.<sup>1</sup> Of the Protestant missions in the Illinois settlements the Lutheran was the farthest advanced.

Among the first Methodist believers who assembled for worship at Little Indian Creek were the Richolsens, Lars and Hilleborg, who homesteaded there in 1841. Mrs. Richolsen had experienced a rapturous personal conversion in an American class meeting at a nearby schoolhouse.<sup>2</sup> She tells of the coming of a Swedish-born preacher who had turned Methodist, though not officially, in his native land. What impressed her most indelibly was his visiting them on a cold and disagreeable November day in 1849. This man was none other than Carl Petter Agrelius, a pioneer missionary whose work merits both gratitude and understanding.

Agrelius was born in Sweden in 1798. Upon acquiring a university education he was ordained into the Lutheran ministry in 1822. For 26 years he served the state church. Converted through the influence of George Scott, a Wesleyan chaplain at Owen's Iron Works in Stockholm, he came to New York in 1848 with his wife and five children. In that great metropolis he labored for the time being as a Methodist missionary among Swedish immigrants,

<sup>1</sup> For a sketch of Eielsen's life see Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: the American Transition*, 132-137.

<sup>2</sup> Among others who attended the union meetings was Torbjörn Arentsen who, upon arriving in New York in 1839, was won to Methodism in the Mariners Bethel Church of that city. In 1844 he settled at Freedom, Illinois. See Algot E. Strand, *A History of the Norwegians in Illinois* (Chicago, 1905), 118. The LaSalle County courthouse records report the homesteading decision of the Richolsens (Ottawa, Illinois). One source of information on Agrelius is an undated interview of John J. Wang with Mrs. Isabel Fosseen, daughter of the Richolsens.

## THE PIONEERS CHOOSE THE MIDDLE WEST

apparently with very limited success.<sup>3</sup> It was Olof Hedström who befriended him during his despondency over his wife's illness, his poor financial circumstances, and his loneliness in a strange land. He joined the Scandinavian Bethelship Mission and was accepted as a local preacher. In 1849 he was appointed to serve the Little Indian Creek and Fox River settlements, assisting Jonas Hedström. In the spring of 1850 a newly created missionary committee of the Rock River Conference sent Agrelius to minister to the Norwegians of Dane County in southeastern Wisconsin, the bounds of the conference then including the southern part of that state. There Methodists from Chicago and Fox River had preceded Agrelius and taken land claims. The Dane County area had first been under the long-range supervision of his benefactor Olof Hedström, then superintendent of the Scandinavian work in America. Of Agrelius it might well be said that he adopted the Scandinavian people of America as his parish. For 25 years he tramped through the forests, visiting pioneers in their log cabins and dugouts, and reading the scriptures and praying with them. In his death he was claimed by the Norwegian Methodists. His body was laid to rest in the churchyard at Deer Park, Wisconsin, in 1881.<sup>4</sup>

Among the frontier evangelists of Norwegian-Danish Methodism was John C. Brown. Although born in Schleswig, then a part of Denmark, he received his elementary education in German schools, near the German border. This early bilingual training explains in part his forceful preaching eventually in Danish, German, and English. He sailed the seas for 12 years, making New York his home port and attending the Mariners Bethel Church,

<sup>3</sup> Victor Witting, *Minnen Fran Mitt Lif*, 203. Nels Hakonson, *The Swedes in Lincoln's Time* (New York, 1942), 12.

<sup>4</sup> S. B. Newman, *Sjelfbiografi*, 144. Memorial by C. Christophersen in *Protokol over Forhandlingerne i den Nordvestlige Norske Aarskonference af den Methodist Episcopale Kirke* (Chicago, 1881), 38. In his report to the annual meeting of the Missionary Society (May 13, 1850) Olof Hedström stated, "With those who have gone west we have sent one minister, who was first taken in among us at the Bethelship. He is now actively employed among the Swedes and Norwegians in Illinois." Agrelius' granddaughter, Mrs. Lewis (Mary) Andersen of Deer Park, Wisconsin, once informed John J. Wang that her grandparents were converted among the Methodists in Sweden and came to America as missionaries.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

through whose influence he was spiritually awakened. God spoke peace to his soul on a night watch in 1844.<sup>5</sup> After his conversion Brown gave up sailing and resided in New York. There he met the Olson (not Hedström) brothers, Olaf and Jonas, prominent in the Janssonist movement. They were on their way west. Brown himself joined their Illinois colony in 1847. It is said that he formed a lasting friendship with Cleng Peerson, the Quaker scout of earlier days, and witnessed Peerson's marriage to a Swedish Janssonist woman.<sup>6</sup> Becoming dissatisfied with "the Prophet," Eric Jansson, he and the Olson brothers left the colony and met each other later in the Fox River settlement. Brown joined the Methodists at Lafayette, Illinois, where Jonas Hedström, founder of a Swedish congregation at Victoria, saw in him great possibilities for leadership. Brown proceeded to preach with marked success at Lafayette, Victoria, Rock Island, and Andover, with revivals in all places. In 1852 the Rock River Conference ordained him deacon and appointed him to serve the Norwegians at Fox River and Little Indian Creek. In both communities he organized congregations in 1853, the first Norwegian Methodist communions to be formed in the state of Illinois. Among the charter members at Little Indian Creek were Lars and Hilleborg Richolsen, previously mentioned. Recorded also are the names of their nine children. Brown was further instrumental in founding a congregation in the

<sup>5</sup> Memorial by James Iverson in *Missionaeren* (January, 1876). This monthly publication, coming out of the office of *Skandinaven* in Chicago, carried the subtitle "Et religiöst Tidsskrift. Udgivet af Methodist-Praedikanter i Wisconsins Konference" (A religious journal published by Methodist preachers of the Wisconsin Conference). It is now filed in the library of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois.

<sup>6</sup> Rasmus B. Anderson quotes Sarah Petterson to that effect in his *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration, 1821-1840*, 183. Eric Jansson, peasant and lay preacher in Sweden, organized a separatist movement. He denounced Lutheranism. Persecution drove him and his followers to America, especially in the years from 1846 to 1854. While a number settled in the East, about 1,500 joined the communal experiment at Bishop Hill in Henry County, Illinois. About 200 persons withdrew from the colony in 1848 and settled in Victoria and Galesburg. Jansson himself was shot to death by an adventurer in Sweden in 1851. Law suits against the colony in Illinois in 1861 and 1862 hastened its dissolution. See Florence Edith Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930* (Chicago, Illinois, 1931), 180-183, and Victor Witting, *Minnen*, 171 ff. A fictional account of the Bishop Hill experiment is available in Stuart David Engstrand's *They Sought for Paradise* (New York and London, 1939).



## THE PIONEERS CHOOSE THE MIDDLE WEST

town of Mission (later Norway) and in establishing preaching points at neighboring centers such as High Prairie, Dayton, and Otter Creek.<sup>7</sup> In 1855, after seven strenuous years, the Rock River Conference relieved him of appointment on grounds of failing health.

John Brown's mantle fell upon the shoulders of Halvor H. Holland, who was appointed to the Leland—Fox River circuit in 1855. Holland had become religiously active among Haugeans in his native Norway. In America in 1854 he experienced conversion under the preaching of John Brown, whose assistant he became. Following Brown's retirement Holland proceeded to evangelize at Holderman's Grove and other places. Not the least of his satisfactions was to witness a revival at High Prairie, which in turn affected other congregations. Memberships increased and two church structures were erected, one in 1857 at Fox River on farm land donated by the son of a pioneer Methodist woman, Carrie Nelson. The other was built at Little Indian Creek in 1858 and was later moved into the village of Leland. When Minnesota attained statehood in 1858 several Methodist families from Little Indian Creek and Fox River chose to settle in Fillmore County. Holland decided to follow his parishioners and organized the Newburg congregation there in 1860. The Minnesota Conference received him on trial in the same year. Hardships of pastoral work brought on his retirement from full-time service around 1864, but he survived until 1897.<sup>8</sup> His successors in Illinois were colleagues of the Swedish Mission District of the Central Illinois Conference.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Witting, *Minnen*, 103. Church records of Leland (formerly Little Indian Creek) and of the town of Mission, consulted by John J. Wang.

<sup>8</sup> H. P. Nielsen, "Pastor Hollands og Hustrus Bortgang" (The Passing of Pastor Holland and his Wife), *Den Christelige Talsmand*, April 20, 1897. Andrew Haagen-sen, *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider Havet* (The History of Norwegian-Danish Methodism on Both Sides of the Ocean) (Chicago, 1894), 33. Hedström's report of July 3, 1857, in *The Missionary Advocate* of October, 1857. Church records of Norway, Illinois, consulted by John J. Wang. Chauncey Hobart, *History of Methodism in Minnesota* (Red Wing, Minnesota, 1887), 301. Of value in this connection is Carl W. Schevenius' four-page section on Norwegian-Danish Methodism in Minnesota in *Our Fathers Built: A Century of Minnesota Methodism* (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1952), 127-130; edited by Charles Nelson Pace, historian of the Minnesota Conference.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Although a few Norwegians and Swedes are said to have held regularly their devotional meetings in Chicago in the late 1830's, the need of a special ministry to Scandinavians was not apparent until 1852. In that year John Clark, pastor of the American First Church, wrote appealingly to Olof G. Hedström of the Bethelship in New York: <sup>9</sup>

The work of God among the Swedes and Norwegians is assuming a very interesting aspect in this city. There are several hundreds of these people here. Those to whom you gave letters have become members, and still they are coming. A Mission among them might be sustained. Will it not be possible for you to come out here for a few days and see us?

Upon Clark's suggestion Bishop Beverly Waugh sent Hedström, as superintendent of all Scandinavian work in America, on a tour of the Northwest. On Christmas Day, 1852, after ten days of evangelistic meetings in the Sailor's Bethel Church, Hedström brought into being a Scandinavian congregation of 75 members, formed into two classes, one for the Swedes and the other for the Norwegians and Danes. S. B. Newman, the Swedish pastor, was soon assisted by Samuel Andersen, a Norwegian who had joined the Methodists at Fox River. Both were members of the Rock River Conference. During the first year the two men conducted their services of worship in two rented rooms at the German Methodist church, on Indiana Avenue. Newman expressed pleasure on two occasions for visits and sermons by O. P. Petersen, then on his way to Norway, and by Willerup, who was attending the annual session of the Rock River Conference.<sup>10</sup>

By 1854, thanks to Newman's foresight, lots were purchased on the corner of Illinois and Market Streets, and a church was erected. None other than superintendent Hedström officiated at the dedication on January 1, 1855. The following September Newman was appointed to the Bethelship in New York, his place being taken by Eric Shogren, who came from the pulpit of the Swedish

<sup>9</sup> *The Missionary Advocate* (May, 1853). First Church records were destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871.

<sup>10</sup> *Missionary Advocate* (July, 1853). S. B. Newman, *Sjelfbiografi*, 135, 141, and 153.

## THE PIONEERS CHOOSE THE MIDDLE WEST

congregation at Victoria, Illinois. Additions to the membership in subsequent years, including not a few in 1862 from the *Sleipner*, the first passenger vessel to navigate the Great Lakes to Chicago direct from Europe, accentuated the need of a separate Norwegian-Danish organization. N. O. Westergreen, the Swedish pastor, recommended in 1867: "We need one more man in Chicago. A good Norwegian brother to labor among the thousands of his countrymen would be acceptable." Captain C. M. Lundgren was even more emphatic in a letter to O. P. Petersen when he said, "Since we have begged our presiding elder for years to no avail, we have now started meetings of our own. As you know, there are in Chicago two Norwegians to every Swede." Victor Witting, commenting from the Swedish standpoint, believed it expedient for the Norwegians to form a fellowship of their own.<sup>11</sup> On the strength of petitions by the Norwegians, the General Conference of 1868 granted the Norwegian Mission District of Wisconsin the right to organize congregations wherever they had the means and the men to do so. Promptly O. P. Petersen, presiding elder of the district, organized the Norwegians in Chicago. From this beginning originated, of course, the entire later mission in the lake city, which became the strongest center of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America.<sup>12</sup>

Steady migration from Illinois and other areas prompted beginnings in Cambridge (Dane County), Wisconsin, and in Washington Prairie (Winnebago County), Iowa. In 1848 one Halvor Garden had chosen to reside in Dane County. Illness cut short his missionary labors in the Cambridge region in the 1850's. As a Quaker convert in Norway, Garden had suffered imprisonment, before the dissenter law of 1845 brought relief from persecution. He owed much of his personal effectiveness to the inspiration of his wife who, as Ingeborg Gilberts, collaborated with another former Quakeress, Anne Hovey, in American Methodist activities in Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and in Washington Prairie in

<sup>11</sup> Among the seven trustees of the new Scandinavian church was John Evans, a prominent citizen after whom the north-shore city of Evanston was later named. Newman, 155-156. Witting, 357 ff. *Missionary Advocate* (October, 1862 and September, 1867). Eltzholtz, *Livsbilleder af Pastor O. P. Petersen*, 219.

<sup>12</sup> *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1868), 13. Haagensen, 52-53.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

1851. Ingeborg Gilberts and Anne Hovey had taken employment in Prairie du Chien. There they made their enthusiasm felt in a Sunday school class of Norwegian young ladies. So buoyant in spirit was Anne that she won the appellation *Anne paa Bjerget* (Anne on the Mountain). Bishop Matthew D. Simpson appointed Halvor Garden pastor of the Washington Prairie circuit upon the transfer of O. P. Petersen to Norway in 1853. Retiring early from the active ministry, but supplying pulpits frequently thereafter, Garden resided in Washington Prairie until his death in 1908.<sup>13</sup> Thus he made important contributions to the beginnings of Methodist activity among his countrymen both in Wisconsin and in Iowa.

Organized efforts and territorial development often coincided, as aspects of the same phenomenon of expansion. Such was the case with Wisconsin. The General Conference of 1848 approved the recommendation of the Rock River Conference that a Wisconsin Conference should be created within its borders. Statehood for Wisconsin came in the same year. The new conference lost no time in getting under way. The first session was held in 1848 in South Port (later Kenosha). Two years later the conference, meeting in Beloit, added five new charges to the Milwaukee District, among them being the Norwegian mission, centered in Dane County. Christian B. Willerup, pioneer in the founding of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America and in Denmark, was appointed to the mission, the first to be established for the benefit of Norwegians and Danes specifically.<sup>14</sup>

Norwegians had arrived in Dane County well in advance of statehood. A number of the earliest were Methodists from the Fox River settlement. Rasmus B. Anderson, himself a trailbreaker in those parts, dates the first arrivals at about 1840. His father, a Quaker in Norway, had personally known a number of Sloopers. Young Rasmus and his six brothers and sisters were baptized in

<sup>13</sup> Alfred Brunson, *A Western Pioneer, or Incidents of the Life and Times of Rev. Alfred Brunson* (Cincinnati and New York, 1872, 2 volumes), volume 2, page 39. W. E. Alexander, *A History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties* (Sioux City, Iowa, 1882), 447.

<sup>14</sup> P. S. Bennett and James Lawson, *History of Methodism in Wisconsin* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1890), 105.



## THE PIONEERS CHOOSE THE MIDDLE WEST

their home in Cambridge by Willerup soon after Willerup's arrival. Had not the mother been related to the wife of the distinguished Lutheran pastor, A. C. Preus, whose parsonage lay only three miles away, the Anderson children might have joined the Cambridge Methodists. But while Rasmus B. Anderson's mother united with Preus's congregation, his father, "a born agitator" the son says, remained loyal to the Friends and obstructed Lutheran progress whenever possible.<sup>15</sup>

Settlement in nearby Primrose may be attributed, in part, to the fortunate discovery of a spring at the juncture of two trails. Beginning in 1839 a log cabin served as a schoolhouse. It was used also for religious purposes by Elling Eielsen, and shortly thereafter by the Norwegian Methodists. One of Willerup's first official acts was to establish Primrose as a preaching point in the Cambridge circuit in April, 1851.<sup>16</sup>

Having been ordained elder at the Bethelship in New York by Bishop Edmund S. Janes in 1850, Willerup proceeded to Milwaukee. Concerning his arrival his presiding elder, Wesson Gage Miller, wrote: <sup>17</sup>

The Scandinavian work was opened this year in Wisconsin. To further this object the missionary management at New York sent Rev. C. Willerup, placing him at the beginning under my care. On reaching the city (Milwaukee?) he found the population using the Scandinavian language too small to organize the work here, and we deemed it advisable to explore the interior. To do this he must have an itinerant's outfit, consisting at least of horse and saddlebags. While he was employed in settling his family in a rented house, I visited the market and purchased a horse for him and the other necessary articles, using my own funds until drafts were received from the missionary treasury.

<sup>15</sup> Rasmus B. Anderson, *First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration*, 170 and 334. *Life Story of Rasmus B. Anderson* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1915), 13. Letter to Sophus A. Norlemann, pastor of the Cambridge (Willerup) Church, on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the congregation, in *Evangelisk Tidende*, May 14, 1931.

In his autobiography Anderson states (page 9) that when he arrived in Copenhagen as United States minister to Denmark in 1885 one of the first things he did was to call upon Willerup, then old and crippled. Willerup, his memory failing, smiled but could not recall the family baptism ceremony of years ago. He died in Denmark the following year.

<sup>16</sup> Albert O. Barton, *The Story of Primrose, 1831-1895* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1895), 65-67. *33rd Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1851), 65.

<sup>17</sup> Wesson Gage Miller, *Thirty Years in the Itinerancy*, 127.

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Norwegian-Danish Methodists of Cambridge, like those in Primrose, first met in a log schoolhouse. Prior to Willerup's appointment of 1850, Agrelius, of Swedish origin, had shepherded the flock. He and his family had made their home in Primrose early in 1850. In the same year the Danish Willerup arrived. Willerup's first sermon in Cambridge, and his first as an ordained man, carried the exhortation so typical of frontier Protestantism: "How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him." (I Kings 18:21) In April, 1851, Willerup organized the Cambridge congregation, with 52 charter members. This was the first strictly Norwegian-Danish group to be organized as a congregation rather than a class, either in America or abroad.<sup>18</sup>

In his report of the year 1851 to the missionary society Willerup related his experiences in launching the foreign-language work in Wisconsin. People walked to church, he said, five or six miles, even in stormy weather. Worship-hungry folk gathered wherever he preached, usually in cabins in the Cambridge vicinity. He translated the *Methodist Discipline* into Norwegian (or Danish) and on two occasions invited all who wished to learn about church doctrine and practice to meet with him. At the two appointments 67 persons joined the church. He had been accustomed to speaking in English only. For twenty years he had scarcely employed his native tongue, the Danish. Now the preaching in the Scandinavian language was going well, he stated. "We think of building a church soon," he happily reported, "a stone structure 44 by 64 feet, such as we ought to have here; besides the seven hundred dollars we have subscribed in money and labor, we have two acres of land on which to build, where we may have the graveyard."<sup>19</sup> To later generations the cemetery in Cambridge has become a shrine.

Willerup's intense devotion to the Cambridge building pro-

<sup>18</sup> Albert O. Barton, *The Story of Primrose*, 72-74. Benedix Ingebrigtsen in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (September 7, 1905). *33rd Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1851), 65. In the original church records, still deposited in the Cambridge church (now Willerup Methodist Church) the names of all charter members appear; perhaps better known than some to posterity are Benedix Ingebrigtsen and his wife Anna, and Halvor Garden.

<sup>19</sup> *33rd Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1851), 65.

gram is substantiated in the report of Isaac Leihy, the presiding elder, to the missionary society. Leihy speaks of Cambridge as "the largest and most prosperous society of the Norwegian Mission." In preparation for the construction of the new building, he writes, "The farmers have mortgaged their farms, and Willerup has applied most of his mission allowance." Willerup had also given his own notes to a considerable amount and had been sued on some of them. Coming home from his swing around the circuit, he was confronted by the sheriff, who threatened to confiscate the young preacher's horse and buggy, so essential to Willerup's success. According to Leihy, Willerup unperturbedly remarked, "Although they may sell me out, they cannot sell the house of God." Willerup had found it necessary to confer in New York with the board of missions in connection with an appropriation for the building. He urged O. P. Petersen to come and speak at the dedication services. Although Petersen found it impossible to oblige, it is a commentary on travel conditions to follow Willerup's directions for proceeding from Washington Prairie, Iowa, to Cambridge, in a day of poor roads and few guideposts: "In Prairie du Chien inquire about Wingville. When you arrive there ask about Dodgeville. Then Pine Bluff, then Madison, then Cambridge." At last the day of dedication arrived, on July 21, 1852, a day of signal achievement in the history of Scandinavian Methodism as a whole.<sup>20</sup> Not only was Cambridge the home of the first Norwegian-Danish congregation in the denomination, but the church structure itself, as one reads on the federal highway sign even today (U.S. 12), was the first of its kind to be used for Scandinavian Methodist services anywhere.

At the annual meeting of the Wisconsin Conference in 1854 Willerup enjoyed seeing four assistants admitted on trial. These were Halvor Garden, O. B. Knudsen, Steen Steensen, and Nils Olsen. Samuel Andersen had been admitted the previous year. Also reported were 198 members, 46 probationers, 5 local preachers, 3 exhorters, 11 class leaders, 17 Sunday school teachers,

<sup>20</sup> Letter of June 26, 1852, from Cambridge, cited in Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, *O. P. Petersen*, 108. Eltzholtz in Peter S. Vig, *Danske i Amerika* (Danes in America) (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1908, 2 volumes), volume 2, pages 354-363.

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84 pupils, and 460 books in Sunday school libraries. At this annual session several changes were made in the Norwegian mission. After four years in Cambridge, Willerup was appointed to Racine. Samuel Andersen, organizer and first pastor in Racine, was sent to the combined Swedish and Norwegian congregation in St. Paul. Halvor Garden left the Washington Prairie charge in Iowa for Cambridge. Isaac Leihy, completing his term as presiding elder, spoke highly of the accomplishments of the Norwegian mission: <sup>21</sup>

The commencement of the mission was but a little more than three years ago, when scarcely the name, much less the doctrine, usage, and power of Methodism, was known among the people. Our last quarterly meeting was of great power and interest. At Cambridge, Hart Prairie, and Sugar River some 30 souls had been converted to God and added to the Church. Among these are 8 or 10 young men of great promise, some of whom, if I mistake not, will make polished shafts in the quiver of the Almighty.

An extended list of pastors and preaching points in Wisconsin in the 1850's includes a galaxy of names. A few may be mentioned. Nils Olsen was converted through Willerup's ministry. After serving several charges he obtained permission to testify of his new life to parents and friends in Norway. Steen Steensen was appointed to Hart Prairie, his home congregation, where he had the satisfaction of building a church on his father's land and of seeing 16 persons added to the original fellowship as a result of protracted meetings (*forlængede møter*), as they were called. O. B. Knudsen organized a congregation of 14 members in Coon Prairie, where a revival prompted John Spillum, Jens Gjertsen, and Robert Olsen, all young men, to declare for the ministry. Coon Prairie shortly became a circuit, with Viroqua, Richland, Otter Creek, Highland, Asbury, and Westby. More successful than most was Richland, with 23 charter members, among whom was Hans Colier, a layman. Colier's gifted services to the church extended over half a century. The Viroqua and Highland-Richland charges raised nearly enough funds to support their pastor in 1857, evi-

<sup>21</sup> *Minutes, Wisconsin Conference (1854)*.



dence of their assumption of financial responsibility but also of the missionary nature of the work in Wisconsin in that decade.<sup>22</sup> American funds, though perhaps not indispensable, were counted upon by the immigrants.

Adolph Cederholm, a Swedish sailor who was converted at the Bethelship, began his ministry as an assistant to Olof Hedström. Received into the Wisconsin Conference in 1857, he was appointed to Viroqua and Richland, then to Primrose. In response to Willerup's request of 1858 for two volunteers for the mission in Norway, Cederholm and Steen Steensen were appointed. In Norway Cederholm labored faithfully for seven years. After two years of service in Sweden he died, in 1867.<sup>23</sup>

After sailing the seas for a number of years Samuel Andersen visited his Stavanger relatives at Fox River. There under John Brown's preaching he was converted in 1850. He joined the Rock River Conference in 1853. He was the first Norwegian Methodist preacher in Chicago, as an assistant to S. B. Newman, the Swedish pastor of the Scandinavian flock there. He organized a congregation of 16 members at Racine, Wisconsin, in 1853. The following year he was the first of his nationality and denomination to preach in Minnesota, where also in 1855 he was mainly responsible for the building of a Scandinavian church in St. Paul, the first such church in the state, as far as is known. Andersen, it is said, was an eloquent speaker, a flaming evangelist, and a scholar who could speak in five languages. So productive had been his ten-months pastorate in Racine that Willerup wrote several years later that he "never found brethren anywhere more of one heart and one

<sup>22</sup> *Missionary Advocate* (May and November, 1857). Report of R. R. Wood, presiding elder, in *39th Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1857), 84.

<sup>23</sup> *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1857), 6. Johan Thorkildsen, *Den Norske Metodistkirkes Historie* (Oslo, Norway, 1926), 69. Witting, *Minnen*, 51. Cederholm's widow disclosed that there was some difficulty in securing Christian burial for her husband. Swedish authorities first consented to burial after sundown, after the casket had been lifted over the cemetery wall. Through the kindly intercession of King Charles XV, however, the funeral cortege was permitted to make its way through the cemetery gates. Years later a hundred Swedish Methodist pastors, in the presence of Bishop Randolph S. Foster, assembled at the grave and sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." See "Pastor A. Cederholm," *Evangelisk Tidende*, April 13, 1933.

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mind, yet serving God under persecution.”<sup>24</sup> While the form of persecution is not specified, possibly Willerup was alluding to the anti-foreign sentiment, even in Methodist circles, in the decade preceding the Civil War. He may also have been hinting at attacks in the Lutheran press at a time when Norwegian-Danish Methodism, without an official organ, was inarticulate.

During his years in St. Paul, Samuel Andersen wooed and won Agrelius' daughter Charlotte, necessitating his walking frequently, however light-footedly, to and from Long Lake in Washington County. After 1857 he travelled the circuit of LaCrosse, Coon Prairie, and Viroqua. At the time of his early death in 1860, at the age of 36, he was serving the Primrose circuit. So did this trailbreaker, once a seafaring wanderer, lay the groundwork for Methodist missions in Chicago, Racine, St. Paul, and smaller centers in Wisconsin.<sup>25</sup>

One of the foremost personalities to engage in pioneer missionary work among Norwegians and Danes in the Middle West was Andrew A. Haagensen. A product of O. P. Petersen's mission to Norway, he left Sarpsborg, where Methodism first took hold in Norway in organized form, and arrived in the United States in 1857, the first of many Scandinavian preachers to traverse the Atlantic westward. In the Sarpsborg fellowship he had filled with great promise the offices of Sunday school superintendent, trustee, and local preacher. Haagensen's reminiscences read like a fairy tale. He found all Norwegian-Danish activities included in a Norwegian district covering ten charges in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. At that time, he recalls, there were eight pastors and 258 members in all. Three Sunday schools were in operation. Appointed local preacher to Hart Prairie, he boarded and roomed among his parishioners. He advanced to the Primrose charge and to Otter Creek, where a chapel was erected jointly with the American Methodists. In contrast with those who died in young manhood, Haagensen remained very active as pastor, editor,

<sup>24</sup> Newman, 142. Witting, 270-272. Willerup in the *Missionary Advocate* (October, 1859).

<sup>25</sup> Chauncey Hobart, *Recollections of My Life* (Red Wing, Minnesota, 1885), 246 and 257. *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1860), 8.

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theologian, and hymn writer until his retirement in 1908. The contributions of his tongue and pen, clearly evident in the growth of the Norwegian-Danish fellowship, will receive further attention. Not the least of satisfactions to Haagensen and his faithful wife was to see their children, eleven in number, achieve distinction in various professional fields.<sup>26</sup>

When the Wisconsin Conference in its session of 1858 ordained Ole Helland and John Olsen as deacons, the hands of the ministry were strengthened. Helland, it will be remembered, as a sailors' missionary in the port of New York, was the first to align himself definitely in ministerial service to the Scandinavians in America. His appointment in 1858 was to Beloit, a new station. John Olsen, appointed to Hart Prairie and Whitewater, prompted the decision of Peter K. Rye, already influenced by Haagensen, to prepare for the pulpit. Rye deplored his lack of education and proceeded to enroll in 1859 at Garrett Biblical Institute in Evanston, Illinois, apparently the first Norseman to avail himself of the invaluable opportunity in that theological seminary, from which he graduated in 1862.<sup>27</sup>

There are those who represent a company of men who served well if not long, some retiring from the pulpit ministry early and others dying prematurely. Edward Petersen, converted through the efforts of an American Methodist clergyman, was such a man. While attending Lawrence University (now

<sup>26</sup> Among the children were Edward, physician and onetime mayor of Hillsboro, North Dakota; Anton, a lawyer practicing in Ashland, Wisconsin; Christine (Mrs. Hans G. Johnson), active in the choir of the Norwegian-Danish church in Ashland, Wisconsin, and a graduate of Northwestern University, where she majored in music; and, Della (Mrs. Thor H. Loberg), wife of a distinguished Evanston layman on the Chicago District who supervised foreign sales for the Chicago office of the International Harvester Company. A grandson, Cushman D. Haagensen, son of Edward, is recognized internationally as a specialist in the study of breast cancer and is the author of two books on that subject.

See "Mindeskraft" (Memorial) in *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1911), 54. Andrew A. Haagensen, "50 Aars Virken" (Fifty years of Activity), *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 26, 1907. Haagensen's address to the Norwegian-Danish annual conference session announcing his retirement, *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 24, 1908.

<sup>27</sup> Haagensen, *Historie*, 23. *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1858), 4-5. *Minutes*, Rock River Conference (1873), 27. *Missionary Advocate* (June, 1859; August, 1862; December, 1864).

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Lawrence College) at Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1854 he was asked to report to a new Norwegian station on the Fond du Lac District. Next he devoted himself to the New London, Hortenville, and Sheboygan charges. For two years he resided in Racine, at which time the church edifice was completed. At the time of Edward Petersen's death in 1863 he was serving Cambridge. According to his obituary, he ranked foremost among his associates as a scholar, possessed a logical mind, and in his preaching made nature aid revelation by its harmonies and illustrations.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most significant events in early Norwegian-Danish Methodism was the conversion of Johan Hendrik Johnson. Arriving in the United States in 1857, he resided for a time in the home of his sister and brother-in-law in Perry, Wisconsin. Shortly the young newcomer, anxious to succeed in his adopted country, was making almost phenomenal progress in the study of English. In fact, he began to teach in the public school. It was while he was teaching in nearby Primrose in 1860 that Elling Eielsen and Andrew Haagensen each conducted camp meetings there, one for Hauge's followers and the other for the Methodists. Since Johan (later John, and also *Lille*, or Little) was exposed to several influences, it is likely that his personal decision in one of Haagensen's meetings was not prompted by any single stimulus. It is said that Johnson's sister and brother-in-law were among the Haugeans who frequented Eielsen's meetings and that Johnson was deeply touched, besides, by the prayers of an old blind man, in whose home a group of the faithful were gathered for devotions. In the opinion of a onetime friend, however, "If they (the Ellingians) had had sense enough to ask him how he felt and had given him a chance to express himself, neither Haagensen nor Methodism would have gotten him."<sup>29</sup>

A long and fruitful pastorate lay ahead for this young man. First, however, he served his country in the Civil War as sergeant in Company G of the almost all-Norwegian Fifteenth Wisconsin

<sup>28</sup> Bennett and Lawson, 149 and 302-304. *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1863), 29.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Owen Nervig of Slater, Iowa, to editor Hans P. Bergh, dated June 15, 1897, in *Den Christelige Talsmand* (exact date unavailable). See also the obituary for Johnson in *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1897), 35.



Regiment. When the regular chaplain, Claus L. Clausen, a Lutheran, was forced to return to civilian life because of illness, Johnson, ordained only as a local preacher, assumed the duties unofficially, albeit with the acclamation of his comrades in arms. Out of the Primrose charge thus arose a man who by virtue of deep effectiveness and length of service would be one of the leaders of the immigrant church. For eight years (1880-1888) he was also extremely influential in advancing the cause of his denomination in Norway.<sup>30</sup>

Another stalwart who eventually gave of his best in Norway as well as America was Nils Christophersen. In the early 1850's this young man came as an immigrant to Rush River (later New Centerville). This western Wisconsin community owed its beginning as a Norwegian settlement to Claus L. Clausen, pioneer Lutheran pastor, who explored the area in 1849 and convinced others of its desirability. In 1854 Christophersen and his wife came under the influence of John Tidlund, a lay preacher, and Agrelius. Having joined the Methodists, Nils Christophersen received authority from the bishop in the annual session of the West Wisconsin Conference to minister to the Norwegian element in Hudson. In 1859 the conference admitted him on trial and appointed him to Rush River. There he organized a congregation in the same year, his wife and seven others being charter members. During the Civil War, probably in 1864, the Christophersens returned to Norway temporarily for the purpose of testifying of their new spiritual life to relatives and friends in Modum parish.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> J. C. Tollefsen, "Primrose, Wisconsin," *Evangelisk Tidende* (March 17, 1932). Waldemar Ager, *Oberst Heg og hans Gutter* (Colonel Heg and his Boys) (Eau Claire, Wisconsin, 1916), 234 and 244 ff. Hans C. Heg commanded the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment.

Johnson's children, three sons and two daughters, achieved success in various fields. Cyrus supervised the foreign exchange department in the State Bank of Chicago. Edwin became assistant manager with the International Harvester Company. Wilbur was a doctor of medicine. Mathilde was the devoted wife of Dr. Albert C. Knudson, professor and later dean of the School of Theology at Boston University. Knudson himself, it will be recalled, was the son of Asle Knudsen, pioneer preacher of the Middle West.

<sup>31</sup> This information is contained, in part, in a letter of November 7, 1951, from Mrs. Ralph (Norah) Howe of Evanston, Illinois, addressed to Arlow W. Andersen. Nils Christophersen was her great-uncle.

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While the Norwegian-Danish branch of Methodism was gathering precious foliage in Illinois and Wisconsin, growth was also taking place in Iowa. Statehood in 1846 and the general movement of population westward proved determinative, while new lands were opened to settlement also because of Indian removals beginning in 1848. In the stream of landseekers, as has been noted, were two Norwegian caravans, both from southeastern Wisconsin. Nelson Johnson Kaasa guided an immigrant train from the Muskego settlement. Erick Andersen Rude performed the same function for a company from Dane County. For the Nelson Johnson party, including his wife and little children, the 200 miles across the badger state consumed five weeks. Driving a herd of a hundred head of cattle, their most formidable obstacle in the near-perfect June weather was the Wisconsin River. There was no bridge, only a small ferry, and the cattle feared the water. One of the party, Elizabeth Groven, solved the problem. She had two cows of her own. She petted them and gave each a handful of salt. Seating herself in the stern of a small boat she called to them, and the cows waded in for more salt. The spell was broken, and the herd swam across.<sup>32</sup>

At Prairie du Chien the Norwegians ferried across the Mississippi, then made their way on the Iowa side from McGregor landing over a military road to Monona. From that camp the men went forth to scout and to stake their claims. Several young ladies had stayed behind in Prairie du Chien to take employment in American homes. A revival broke out among them in the American Methodist Sunday school, where they comprised a class by themselves, led by the irrepressible Anne Hovey, or "Anne on the Mountain." Alfred Brunson, the pastor, commented rather regretfully, "If we had a preacher that could speak the Norwegian language, we would here have a great field of labor."<sup>33</sup> Methodist folk in Prairie du Chien and Monona had befriended the newcomers.

<sup>32</sup> *History of Clayton County, Iowa* (Chicago, Illinois, 1882), 586 and 997. No author's name is given.

<sup>33</sup> Alfred Brunson, *A Western Pioneer, or Incidents of the Life and Times of Rev. Alfred Brunson*, volume 2, pp. 38-39. Eltzholtz, Petersen, 92.

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First to conduct services of worship in Washington Prairie were Anne Hovey and Ingeborg Gilberts. The revival spirit followed them from Prairie du Chien. Prior to the coming of O. P. Petersen, a layman, Per Asbjørnsen Mehus, conducted services. Encouraged by the prospects, the Board of Missions requested Henry W. Reed, presiding elder of the Upper Iowa District, to report on the situation. His reply was optimistic: "I find here two or three large Norwegian settlements, in Clayton, Allamakee, and Winneshiek Counties. . . . I have talked with the brethren about sending a missionary to them and they think, as I, that it should be done at once. If a young man could be appointed, he should be here in the spring. It looks good to me."<sup>34</sup> On the strength of Dr. Reed's report and the approval of the Board of Missions the Iowa Conference organized the Norwegian mission, and Bishop Beverly Waugh appointed O. P. Petersen to the circuit in August, 1851.

Personal tragedy sometimes struck the infant colonies. In the summer of 1850 came Tallef Simonsen Aa with his bride of 19. She was not in good health, and no doctor could be summoned. When she died there was no lumber to be had for a coffin. Learning of his neighbor's sad plight, Nelson Johnson ripped boards from the ceiling of his own cabin. The coffin was made, and with simple but devout ceremony Kristine Aa was laid to rest in Washington Prairie.<sup>35</sup>

After a visit of eleven months in Norway O. P. Petersen and his young bride arrived in America, in June of 1850. Although Petersen had reached no decision in favor of the ministry, Olof Hedstrøm and certain members of Methodist officialdom encouraged him. Later that year he became assistant at the Bethel-ship. No sooner had he been received on trial by the New York Conference than he was transferred, in September of 1851, to the faraway Iowa Conference. By steamboat and by horse and

<sup>34</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 93. *Missionary Advocate* (March, 1851).

<sup>35</sup> Hjalmar Ruud Holand, *Den Sidste Folkevandring* (The Last Migration), 163, *Decorah Posten* (Decorah, Iowa), December 30, 1938.

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buggy the Petersen family made their way to Prairie du Chien.<sup>36</sup>

Petersen left his family in Prairie du Chien during the first winter. They had travelled 1,100 miles with him from New York City. Yet for the future founder of Methodism in Norway it was only the beginning of a long trail, covering fifty years. His first meeting with presiding elder Reed took place in Clayton County in November, 1851. Reed equipped him with a riding horse, a saddle, and saddlebags. Under the date of November 10 Petersen presented his credentials as a local preacher at the Allamakee County courthouse and was granted authority to solemnize marriages. That very day he rode to the cabin of Nelson Johnson and preached the first sermon under his new orders.<sup>37</sup>

Nelson Johnson's cabin home became the first Norwegian Methodist meeting house west of the Mississippi. Here O. P. Petersen organized the Washington Prairie faithful in April, 1852, with seven charter members. From the Johnson home itself went forth seven well educated sons and daughters. All attended Methodist colleges. Martin, United States Senator from North Dakota at the time of his death in 1909, and his brother Louis committed themselves to the Christian life while attending Upper Iowa University, at Fayette. James A. Sanaker, veteran preacher, tells of being received into membership with them at Washington Prairie on a Sunday morning in 1868, the pastor then being Arne A. Johnsen.<sup>38</sup>

Petersen's account of his early Iowa experiences is full of interest. Not infrequently he stopped overnight with strange families, where hospitality was taken for granted. Sometimes husband and wife gladly confided that they had hoped that he would come their way. Neighbors would appear at the house for worship in the morning, then follow Petersen devotedly from place to place during the day. From Prairie du Chien he reported, "I have

<sup>36</sup> The urgings came in correspondence from James Floy, chairman of the committee on home missions; J. P. Durbin, missionary secretary; and David Terry, executive secretary of missions. See Eltzholtz, 79 ff. and 95, and W. E. Alexander, 265 and 713.

<sup>37</sup> Eltzholtz, 100.

<sup>38</sup> Haagensen, 12 and 19. James A. Sanaker, "Ungdomsminder" (Memories of Youth), *Evangelisk Tidende* (January 17, 1929).



just returned from my first trip of more than three weeks. The circuit is large, extending over four counties, with distances between points a whole day's travel." He feared, he said, that he would be unable to see his family during the winter, as it was dangerous to cross the river to Prairie du Chien on the ice. When spring came a Lutheran family invited the Petersens to share their cabin at Washington Prairie until a parsonage could be built. Petersen soon organized a congregation at Big Canoe (Locust ) in the northern part of the settlement, in the summer of 1852.<sup>39</sup>

Petersen's nearest neighbor among the Norwegian-Danish ministers was Christian Willerup in Cambridge, Wisconsin, some 200 miles to the east. The two had met at the Bethelship in New York when Willerup, on the way to the Cambridge appointment, was ordained elder in October, 1850. A meaningful correspondence began, eventuating shortly in plans for assisting each other in special meetings. Willerup came to Washington Prairie during the summer of 1852 and held camp meetings near Freeport. Petersen in turn visited Cambridge in April, 1853, before the farmers got too busy, as Willerup had advised. There he preached in the newly erected stone church, the first permanent church edifice in Scandinavian Methodism. It was during his visit to Cambridge that Petersen received a letter from Bishop Waugh calling him to missionary service in Norway. Petersen's decision was momentous. Upon it depended, in large measure, the future development of Methodism in the European homeland.<sup>40</sup>

Not all was patriotic celebrating in the little Washington Prairie community on July 4, 1853. On that day Petersen left the flock which he had served for only a year and nine months. The ever faithful Nelson Johnson drove the Petersens to McGregor, where a tearful parting took place. Henry W. Reed, the presiding elder, expressed the feelings of many when he reported to Bishop Waugh his doubts as to whether the Norwegians in Iowa would ever be privileged to have the equal of O. P. Petersen in their

<sup>39</sup> Eltzholtz, 111-113.

<sup>40</sup> Eltzholtz, 106 and 116 ff. *Missionary Advocate* (September, 1852). Willerup had urged Petersen to come to Cambridge in a letter dated March 8, 1853.

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midst. Petersen, then a member of the Iowa Conference, retained his membership in it. He was the first missionary to represent that body overseas. Since he had to leave before the annual meeting, the Wyoming Conference, then in session, recommended him for ordination as elder. He arrived in Christiania (now Oslo) in December, 1853.<sup>41</sup>

When in 1848 the Methodist Episcopal Church organized the first Protestant congregation in St. Paul, Minnesota, it soon became evident that efforts must be made to minister to Scandinavians who attached themselves to the parent society. Perhaps the first word concerning Scandinavian Methodism in the future capital city is a statement by T. M. Fullerton, the pastor, recorded in his journal on February 26, 1853: "I have this day written to Rev. Willerup of the Norwegian Mission in Wisconsin, asking him to come up to St. Paul. There are many Swedish and Norwegian people here, ripe for the harvest, and they cannot understand English." Fullerton's letter to Willerup, later published in the *Missionary Advocate*, presents the background:<sup>42</sup>

Last spring there came two girls from Rev. Petersen's congregation in Iowa. Mrs. Elizabeth Day, who came to visit her daughter, brought them to St. Paul. Grandma Day talked to me about them, and with her help they found good places to work. . . . Anne Hovey and Ingeborg Gilberts, right out from "Holy Peter's" revivals, became flaming torches in St. Paul. . . . They brought their people to our class and prayer meetings. Many of them testified and prayed in their own language, and we held meetings occasionally in their homes.

The two young ladies from Iowa indelibly impressed Fullerton, who at one time soliloquized, "Perchance the Lord in mercy is scattering these people (the Swedes and Norwegians) over the great prairies in order to purify the American church. . . . I do think that it was the guiding hand of the Almighty that sent these two girls already mentioned, to us."<sup>43</sup> So "Anne on the Moun-

<sup>41</sup> See Eltzholtz, page 128, for a copy of the document of ordination.

<sup>42</sup> Chauncey Hobart, *History of Methodism in Minnesota*, 118. *Missionary Advocate* (July, 1853). Grandma Day is also mentioned by Eltzholtz (p. 122) and W. E. Alexander (pp. 171 and 262).

<sup>43</sup> Letter quoted by Eltzholtz, 122-125.

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tain" and Ingeborg Gilberts spread their new-found faith in their distinctive way to Minnesota, having already done so in Wisconsin and Iowa.

In the summer of 1853 Willerup visited St. Paul in response to Fullerton's urgent invitation. According to the presiding elder, David Brooks, Willerup succeeded in organizing a congregation at that time with John Tidlund, probably of Swedish descent, as the foremost member. Soon to become a lay preacher, Tidlund had arrived in 1852 with his wife and other charter members from "Father" Taylor's congregation in Boston. Before the summer of 1853 had passed, Carl P. Agrelius, who had already visited the Minnesota mission at Willerup's request, received his appointment to St. Paul by the Wisconsin Conference. At the first quarterly conference the congregation was officially named "The Scandinavian Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>44</sup>

Encouragement toward construction of a church edifice came from several quarters. David Brooks appealed to American Methodists in the pages of the *Missionary Advocate* to assist in the raising of a "tabernacle in the wilderness." The Scandinavian faithful had given to the limits of their ability, he explained. Charles W. Borup, a Dane, donated lots. Borup functioned as the first Danish consul in the north star state and also enjoyed the distinction of being the first banker there.<sup>45</sup> John Tidlund and others made a house to house canvass for subscriptions.

During the ministry of Samuel Andersen, transferred from Racine in 1854, the St. Paul structure was built. On one trip to the East he raised \$900. Later, with his own scanty allowance, he paid the balance of the church debt. The St. Paul church was apparently the first Norwegian (then also Scandinavian) house of worship, Methodist or otherwise, in Minnesota. Andersen also succeeded in getting a parsonage built almost debt-free. Concerning further developments in the area, the historian of Minnesota Methodism writes: "Samuel Andersen and C. P. Agrelius traveled the mission with preaching points at St. Paul, Minneapolis, Still-

<sup>44</sup> Witting, *Minnen*, 474.

<sup>45</sup> For Borup see "Minnesota in three centuries," in Peter S. Vig, *Danske i Amerika*, volume 1, pages 195-199.

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water, Marine, Taylor Falls, Chisago Lake, and points along the Mississippi and Minnesota Rivers, with very encouraging results. Several classes were organized.”<sup>46</sup> In 1855 the two pioneers reported 40 members and 12 probationers.

John Tidlund joined the ministerial ranks in 1856, his first pastoral responsibility being to St. Peter, Scandia Grove (later Norseland), and Swan Lake (later Brighton), all of which were activated by migrants from Willerup's congregation in Cambridge, Wisconsin. Earliest to arrive in St. Peter, probably in 1854, were the Ole Nelsen Norman family, Elias Larsen and his wife, and Christian Andersen. The last named brought his family and two brothers in 1855, and together they staked their claims on the shores of Swan Lake. A covered wagon caravan of seven families arrived from the Cambridge vicinity in 1856. While Tidlund organized a class at Scandia Grove in 1855, Wessen Berg, a local preacher from Norway, accomplished the same at Swan Lake in 1858. Tidlund filled the St. Paul pulpit after 1857, when Samuel Andersen was transferred to LaCrosse. He was relieved in 1859 upon the formation of a Scandinavian district. Eric Shogren, a Swede, was then given the St. Paul charge as well as the duties of presiding elder. Frail and sickly, Tidlund carried on in another appointment for two more years, until his death in 1861.<sup>47</sup>

Agrelius' first tour of the Chisago Lake area came in 1853. Challman and Shogren, both Swedes, duplicated his tour of inspection in 1854, finding countrymen who had turned to Methodism in Illinois. The first Norwegian Methodists to settle in that community were the H. A. Andersens, husband and wife, in 1857. In Norway they had joined the church in Fredrikshald (later Halden), following the Petersen-led revival there. For five years Agrelius, too poor to own a horse, traveled the mission on foot, visiting every family. By 1858 he could say with satisfaction, "We now have a church at Chisago Lake and another church

<sup>46</sup> Chauncey Hobart, *History of Methodism in Minnesota*, 151 and 300-301. *Missionary Advocate* (1859), 94.

<sup>47</sup> Hobart, *Methodism in Minnesota*, 304. Mrs. S. O. Petersen, "History of Brighton," *Evangelisk Tidende* (February 26, 1931).



in the Marine settlement." Both were erected debt-free. For a time Agrelius subsisted on fish in his little log house on the shores of Long Lake in the Marine settlement. The family homesteaded in that vicinity until 1878, when Agrelius and his wife moved to St. Croix County, Wisconsin, to live with their son. There the Deer Park congregation, which they had founded, honored and loved them for the rest of their days. Agrelius died in 1881. Thus for Carl Petter Agrelius came the end of his earthly trail, beginning in Sweden and passing through Little Indian Creek in Illinois into the sparsely settled Northwest.<sup>48</sup>

While Methodist work among immigrant peoples in Minnesota was just beginning, American leaders in Wisconsin were voicing their discontent over the Norwegian-Danish mission, resorting mainly to the argument of financial wastefulness. The West Wisconsin Conference adopted a resolution expressing confidence that missionary expenses would be greatly reduced if the work were incorporated into the American districts. The resolution went on to suggest that a more intimate fellowship would result, and that there would be a tendency to "cultivate in them (the foreign-born Germans and Scandinavians) a knowledge of our language and of our institutions and to Americanize them in their views and feelings." Hardly had this decision been reached when the neighboring Wisconsin Conference eliminated the Norwegian District, one year and eight months after its creation. Consequently, twelve missionaries were distributed over four conferences, touching three states. The following year (1859) the West Wisconsin colleagues memorialized the forthcoming General Conference, urging a more rapid Americanization of the foreign-born in their midst.<sup>49</sup>

As far as the Norwegians were concerned, dissolution solved no problem. The preachers, meeting in Cambridge in 1859, petitioned the Wisconsin Conference for a Norwegian presiding elder. In the annual session of the adjoining West Wisconsin

<sup>48</sup> Hobart, *Methodism in Minnesota*, 119. Jonas Hedstrøm's report in *37th Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1855), 111.

<sup>49</sup> *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1858), 6. *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1858), 20 and (1859), 20-21.

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Conference Bishop Osman C. Backer asked the Norwegian brethren whether a new district was desired, to which they answered yes. Whether a Swedish presiding elder would be acceptable, however, they doubted. They preferred a native American to the Swedish alternative. In the early 1860's both conferences passed resolutions approving the creation of a Norwegian mission district under a "Danish" presiding elder, as they put it. Finally, at the Wisconsin Conference session of 1863 a decision was reached to organize the Norwegian mission into a district covering the entire state. Olof Hedstrøm's influence with Methodist officials in New York may have helped. Perhaps, also, the war was bringing fusion out of confusion, admiration rather than scorn for the aliens who were contributing nobly both in numbers and in valor to success on the battlefield. O. P. Petersen became the new presiding elder, with six charges and 284 members under his supervision, a modest but promising beginning.<sup>50</sup>

Petersen had arrived in New York from Norway in 1859, after six eventful years in his homeland. He took Olof Hedstrøm's place at the Bethelship, Hedstrøm going into retirement because of ill health. During his first year at Bethelship Petersen received 21 persons into full membership, raising the total to 72. The plan of the Board of Missions, however, was that Petersen, now transferred from the Iowa to the New York Conference, should remain long enough in America to acquire citizenship, then return to Norway. With American credentials, so ran the strategy, he could count on gentler treatment at the hands of Norwegian authorities. But, on the strength of three petitions by his ministerial friends in Wisconsin, Bishop Levi Scott appointed the trailbreaker of Methodism in Norway to preside over the new Norwegian mission district.<sup>51</sup> Petersen delivered his farewell sermon (November 1, 1863) in the presence of John Price Durbin, corre-

<sup>50</sup> Haagensen, 30 and 41. Bennett and Lawson, 210 and 376. *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1860), 22 and (1862), 16. *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1861), 13. Hedstrøm's letter to Haagensen (February, 1863) deplored the spread of the Norwegian missionary work over several conferences and the lack of a Norwegian presiding elder. See Haagensen, 41-42.

<sup>51</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 205 ff. *42nd Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1860), 70-71. *Missionary Advocate* (October, 1859).

sponding secretary of the Missionary Society, and Harold Døllner, Danish consul in New York City who had proved to be a benefactor, financially speaking, of Methodist work in Copenhagen. Present too was Hedstrøm, who had just returned from a tour of the Scandinavian countries and had observed many fruits of his Bethelship labors.

Prior to and during the Civil War the Norwegian-Danish branch of American Methodism faced several problems and suffered considerable retardation. The first, already cited, was the prevailing Yankee suspicion of foreigners. With the swelling immigrant tide, especially of the Germans and the Irish, American nativism bristled in the newspaper press and from the public platform. As European cultures came to be less appreciated, often openly denounced as dangerous to true Americanism, Scandinavians bore some of the stigma of alien birth and strange speech. Northern states were caught up in the superpatriotism of the Know Nothing movement and of the Order of the Star Spangled Banner.

A second deterrent was a desperate shortage of pastors. Christian B. Willerup and O. P. Petersen, both key men, were transferred to Methodist missions in Norway and Denmark. Nils Christophersen left his post in western Wisconsin to witness among former associates in Norway. Low salaries, in no way helped by hard times and the panic of 1857, discouraged potential ministers. Some of the clergy enlisted in the Union Army. Among O. Ulland, Bengt Olin, Karl Schou, and John H. Johnson were among them. Peter K. Rye was called into military service but was allowed to proceed to the Danish mission, where Willerup was expecting him. Andrew Haagensen was spared, failing to pass his physical examination. Fortunately, he was available to fill the important Racine pulpit in 1864 and found time in 1865 to organize a new field in Milwaukee. To aggravate the ministerial shortage further, several promising young leaders died early deaths, in a day when sulfa drugs and penicillin were unknown.<sup>52</sup>

Another obstacle to progress was the hold of traditional Luther-

<sup>52</sup> Haagensen, 43-44.

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anism upon the transplanted Europeans, notwithstanding conspicuous Methodist gains in frontier America. While some newcomers were critical of the formalism, of the state connections, and of certain theological views of the church of their childhood, the loyalty of the vast majority remained unshaken. Moreover, if on occasion Lutheran periodicals misrepresented, or were thought to misrepresent, Methodist beliefs and aims, there was no Norwegian-Danish Methodist press to reply. Not until 1870 did the small monthly *Missionæren* (The Missionary) make its bow. Given the contentious spirit of the times, reflected in both secular and religious papers, it is hardly strange that unfragrant remarks were directed toward dissenters. Undoubtedly Norwegian-Danish editors, had there been any, would have replied in kind. In later years O. P. Petersen, Andrew Haagensen, and others devoted much of their energy to attacking and refuting Lutheran arguments.

While adversities there were, Norwegian-Danish Methodism nevertheless made gains in membership and influence in the 1850's. The secret is to be found mainly in the pre-eminent leadership of Willerup and Petersen, supplemented by able recent converts like Haagensen, and in the deep craving of their listeners. In the judgment of Carl W. Schevenius, an understanding pastor and scholar of the later Norwegian-Danish Conference, these men of God possessed excellent minds, attractive personalities, intense zeal for the salvation of their fellows, and a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. Few among the Americans surpassed them as evangelists, and their advice was sought privately by many persons in religious matters. Willerup wrote that not a day passed, when he was at home in Cambridge, but that ten to twenty persons sought his counsel. Cambridge church records also reveal that some 120 persons were baptized by Willerup in the six-year span from 1851 to 1857. And so impressive were Petersen's revival meetings in Washington Prairie that seekers implored his intercession as he was departing from that Iowa settlement. There could also be amusing episodes, says Schevenius, on either side of the ocean. Once when Petersen was preaching in Norway he was describing a drunkard. A man arose and remained standing



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during the whole description. When Petersen came to the next point, which was the hypocrite, the man turned to his neighbor and said, "Now you get up. This is your picture."

From the standpoint of American political and social movements, the period from the Mexican War through the Civil War is recognized as one of continued westward movement and growing national consciousness. Although private letters and newspaper editorials are practically non-existent, as far as Norwegian-Danish Methodists in America are concerned, the immigrants from northern Europe undoubtedly shared in the excitement of the times, culminating in the war fever of the 1860's. Fortunately, a new appreciation of the immigrant contribution to the Union cause and a bulge in the flow of newcomers would work to the advantage of a small minority in a great denomination. The more immediate result was the creation of additional mission districts in the Middle West.

## *The Norwegian Mission Takes Form*

AN ALMOST BEWILDERING SUCCESSION of administrative changes characterized the period of the 1860's and 1870's. Prior to the organization of the Norwegian-Danish Conference in 1880 several districts, operating more or less independently, provided opportunity for Christian expression within the Methodist framework. One reads of a mission within the West Wisconsin Conference (1864-69), later to become the Norwegian District of the Wisconsin Conference. From 1869 to 1876 Chicago also was included within the bounds of the Wisconsin Conference. Even the LaSalle County charges farther south in Illinois counted themselves, after 1872, within the Norwegian District of that conference. Temporarily known as the Norwegian mission, the field was subdivided in 1878 into the Milwaukee and Chicago districts. Meanwhile, a Scandinavian district functioned within the Minnesota Conference from 1859 to 1872, after which time Swedes and Norwegians went their separate ways. The Norwegian mission in the gopher state underwent further change in 1876 with the creation of a Minnesota District and an Iowa District.

In the Wisconsin mission substantial gains in membership and church extension marked the post-war years. Many a rustic pew was filled and many a rugged hymn of salvation was raised for the first time in the immigrant communities. Physical breakdowns of a dozen or so pastors and lay preachers within a brief span of years were counter-balanced by fresh and vigorous leadership. Of great encouragement was O. P. Petersen's return from Norway in 1863. He was recalled to Norway in 1869 but began a three-year pastorate in Chicago First Church in 1871. Simultaneous with his transfer to the New York East Conference in 1874 came Willerup's reappearance after an absence of 19 years as superintendent of the mission in Denmark. With his usual distinction Petersen filled the Brooklyn pulpit of the newly or-

ganized Norwegian-Danish Bethelship Church, an outgrowth of the Scandinavian Bethelship of former days.

To Wisconsin came new personalities, products of Petersen's efforts in Norway. Outstanding among them was Andrew Haagen-sen, who served most conspicuously as pastor, author, editor, and hymn writer until the turn of the century. In 1868 Haagensen was responsible, together with O. P. Petersen, for the publication of the first hymnal for his people, mainly a selection of translations from the English. The book appeared as *Psalmer og Sanger til Guds Ære og hans Menigheds Opbyggelse* (Hymns and Songs to the Glory of God and to the Edification of his Congregation). It served its purpose well for, in the words of a hymnal committee member of a later day, the hymnals that were imported contained "stern hymns of penitence and judgment" with "slow, melancholy tunes" and were "not suited for a newly converted and regenerated people, who preferred hymns of peace, joy, thanksgiving, and victory."

Again with O. P. Petersen's assistance a Sunday school hymnal, *Den Syngende Pilgrim*, was introduced in 1869. *Missionæren* (The Missionary), a monthly which carried news and religious discussion, followed in 1870. Haagensen, John H. Johnson, and Karl Schou continued as editors, without financial remuneration, until the paper was superseded by the larger and more permanent *Den Christelige Talsmand* (The Christian Advocate) in 1877. With some help from Petersen and Johnson, Haagensen composed a new hymnal in 1872, since the unsold copies from 1868 and the plates themselves were casualties of the great Chicago fire. Before the Norwegian-Danish Conference was organized, the tireless Haagensen collaborated in the translation of *Methodism's Handbook* (1876), published with Christian Treider 27 of John Wesley's sermons (1877), and translated 50 of the Bliss and Sankey songs, as well as certain of Dwight L. Moody's stories (1879). And more was forthcoming from his busy mind and pen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 3, 1907; this is an article reviewing Haagen-sen's literary activities. Carl W. Schevenius, "Conference hymnals and song books," historical section of the *Journal and Yearbook of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 66.

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New life infected the Norwegian mission in the 1860's. Demonstrating this vitality was the anticipation of a theological seminary 20 years before its realization. When American Methodists decided in 1866 to raise a thank offering in commemoration of a century of independent progress, the West Wisconsin Conference thereupon adopted a resolution, proposed by Haagensen, that the General Conference through its centennial committee should be asked to give favorable consideration to the allocation of the Norwegian offering toward the establishment of a Norwegian professorship at one of the Methodist schools of higher learning. As the agent delegated to collect the funds, Haagensen gathered several thousand dollars.

Hardly had the West Wisconsin sessions ended when steps were taken toward the creation of a Scandinavian seminary in a joint meeting in Chicago. Olof Hedström presided and doubtless concurred in the decision to select two professors, one Swedish and the other Norwegian or Danish. Albert Erickson and Christian Willerup were chosen. The suggestion of a single Scandinavian seminary received another airing in a Chicago meeting in 1868. There it was agreed that plans for a joint venture should be held in abeyance and that either of the two parties should be free to establish its own seminary if circumstances permitted. At that point many constituents who had made pledges toward a common school lost interest. The Norwegian-Danish brethren had no difficulty in reading the handwriting on the wall and promptly set up their own committee of five pastors to seek an appropriate location for a separate school, or at least a class.

If nothing came of the proposal for a Scandinavian seminary it was doubtless because feelings grounded in national issues in the European fatherlands precluded harmonious cooperation. As Haagensen explains it, Scandinavianism was a dream that was destined to fall short of fulfillment, whether in connection with a seminary, a publication, books, districts, or annual conferences. Swedish sources seem to have shared this belief.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Haagensen, 46-48 and 58-59. T. Otmann Firing, "The Norwegian-Danish Theological Seminary," historical section of the *Journal and Yearbook of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 64. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 26, 1907. In



Church affairs often gave way to everyday problems in a new environment. Haagensen refers touchingly to the song of the Norsemen who found themselves in strange surroundings and struggled to understand the words of their American neighbors. Framed in sentiment-laden *landsmaal*, the dialect of the common folk, it invited the uprooted dwellers of the hills and valleys of the North to sit down and chat about the trials of their present life. In the graphic translation of one scholar the third stanza reads: <sup>3</sup>

The new speech, it was tough to acquire,  
And we often got into a mess.  
When a Yankee your name would inquire,  
You'd solemnly answer him, "Yes."

Haagensen's accomplishments in hymnology border on the colossal. No less than 333 hymns, though not the tunes, were written by this inspired man, approximately half being translations from the English and the Scandinavian. Most familiar of the original poems set to music were "O store Gud, vi ydmyg knæle," "Ungdoms Mindets kjære Hjem," and "Stem i en Sang, Guds Israel." <sup>4</sup> Among the best known of his translations were "Rock of Ages," "A Charge to Keep I Have," "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," and "Cast Thy Bread upon the Waters."

The youthful and versatile Haagensen moved on to Racine and Milwaukee, the latter organized by him in 1865. Several Methodist families from Norway provided the nucleus in Racine, where revivals swelled the membership to a hundred by 1867. Haagensen took the Cambridge pulpit in 1867. Others assumed responsibility

1875 the editor of *Søndebudet* (The Messenger), Swedish Methodist weekly, wrote these lines: "Scandinavianism is a three-headed monstrosity in church affairs and cannot continue. We have realized that Scandinavianism does not work, either in school or in church. It must be either Swedish or Norwegian." Quoted from *Missionæren*, monthly publication of Norwegian-Danish Methodism (March, 1875).

<sup>3</sup> Theodore C. Blegen, *Grass Roots History* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1947), 49. The words of the original are as follows:

Lære Spraaket var noket som leita,  
Ofte stod vi med skamfulde Fjæs,  
Naar en Jenky spurgte, ka me heita,  
Det raakad vi svarte ham "Yes."

<sup>4</sup> "O Great God, we humbly kneel," "Dear home of childhood memories," and "Join in a song, God's Israel." (free translation)

for new congregations in Highland, Richland, Deer Park, Ashipun, Oconomowoc, and Sheboygan. To Haagensen in 1869 came the presiding eldership of the Norwegian District of the Wisconsin Conference.<sup>5</sup>

From the joint Scandinavian venture of 1852-68 emerged the first Norwegian Methodist congregation in Chicago. In a chapel which was bought and moved to the corner of Sangamon and Ohio Streets in 1865 a Norwegian class began to meet. On June 18, 1868, O. P. Petersen, presiding elder of the Wisconsin District, formed a Norwegian congregation of 26 members, of whom 22 were transfers from the hitherto Scandinavian flock. To this new church, deeded to the Norwegian society by the Scandinavian congregation, Petersen soon became pastor. He continued, however, as presiding elder, as was the practice then.<sup>6</sup> Records of the first quarterly conference reveal an increase of membership to 61. The pastor would receive in salary \$1,000 and a house.

Methodist expansion in the three Scandinavian lands prompted the appointment of Petersen to the Norway mission in 1869, allowing Willerup to labor in Denmark exclusively, and Victor Witting in Sweden. John H. Johnson then came to Chicago to begin an almost phenomenal ministry. Mustered out of the Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment in 1865, he attended Whitewater College and found time to preach on Sundays at Hart Prairie and nearby points. Subsequent assignments in the West Wisconsin Conference took him to the Coon Prairie-Richland circuit and to Sheboygan-Manitowoc. Sheboygan, where an abandoned saloon first housed the worshipers, owned a church and a parsonage by 1868.<sup>7</sup>

In Chicago Johnson first secured a larger sanctuary, through the purchase of the West Indiana Church. Of great help in defraying the cost of \$14,000 was a gift of \$5,000 from the Wabash Avenue Church through the kindness of its pastor, Charles H.

<sup>5</sup> *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1867), 17 and 25.

<sup>6</sup> Haagensen, 53. Witting, *Minnen*, 362-364. *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1868), 13. Bennett and Lawson, 376 and 394.

<sup>7</sup> Eltzholtz, *Petersen*, 231-239. Waldemar Ager, *Oberst Heg og Hans Gutter*, 312. *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1868), 6.

Fowler. He was also instrumental in having elected as trustees of the Norwegian society two of his own church officials. Orrington Lunt among them. Lunt would later be prominent in church and civic affairs in Evanston.<sup>8</sup>

*Missionæren* (April, 1871) testifies to the gratifying results of an eleven-weeks revival during Johnson's pastorate, an event which by some is considered the greatest visitation of divine grace among the Norwegian Methodists. At the annual conference session of 1871 Johnson reported 416 members, said to have been the highest membership among the congregations, American included, in the Wisconsin Conference.<sup>9</sup> When Petersen returned to Chicago from Norway in 1871 Johnson took up the work in Racine. Meanwhile, the great Chicago fire of October 9, 1871, gave opportunity for the Norwegians to open their church to the homeless and the destitute, who were fed and clothed by the women of the congregation. Swedish Methodists, having lost their church to the flames, shared the sanctuary for a time with their Scandinavian brothers and sisters.

The constant movement of population and the long distances some of the members of First Church had to travel strongly suggested the advisability of another congregation. A student, O. L. Hansen, started meetings in the Dickson Avenue Church, which were later held in the German Methodist structure on Ashland Avenue. Appointed to this new mission in 1872 was Christian Olsen Treider, under whom the Rolling Mills congregation was organized in January, 1873. Treider also built what was known as Second Church on the corner of Division and Holt Streets.<sup>10</sup> Converted and trained under the ministry of Willerup in Norway, Treider came to America and joined the Wisconsin Conference in 1869. He served effectively several charges before organizing Chicago Second Church. Upon completion of his two years in Chicago he reported a membership of 34 and a Sunday school of 130 children.

<sup>8</sup> *Missionæren* (December, 1870).

<sup>9</sup> *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1871), 43.

<sup>10</sup> *Missionæren* (August, 1873). Haagensen, 56 ff.

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Another result of the expansion of Chicago First Church was the establishment of a congregation in Evanston, a north shore neighbor. There Karl Schou, a local preacher, started a class of twenty members in 1870. Before the year was out, John H. Johnson completed the organization. Schou had come as a youth from Denmark in 1860. Following service in the Civil War, he was converted in the American Methodist Church of Lafayette, Indiana. Called to the ministry, he began his studies at Northwestern University and Garrett Biblical Institute. In 1869, upon returning from a visit to Denmark, he joined the First Church fellowship. During his Evanston pastorate Schou bought, moved, and remodelled the original American First Church, the building being dedicated in 1872 with a sermon by President E. O. Haven of Northwestern University. The report of that year showed 69 members, a parsonage, and a Sunday school of 75 pupils and officers.<sup>11</sup>

Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, who came to Chicago First Church in 1874, is among the pioneers most successful in breathing life into Norwegian-Danish Methodism, both in America and in his native Denmark. His diary, covering his activities and interests from 1867 to 1888, speaks in detail of failures and accomplishments alike.<sup>12</sup> Although he was not given to the practice of fasting regularly, there were times when his anxiety for the salvation of souls moved him to deny himself food and drink. It is little wonder that, replete with unusual talent and dynamic personality, his long ministry led hundreds to profess Christianity in a personal way.

Once in the military service of Denmark, and a convert to Methodism in his native land, Eltzholtz was received into the West Wisconsin Conference and assigned to Ashippun and Oconomowoc. Appointed to a new field each year for evangelistic purposes, he moved to Racine in 1870, Cambridge in 1871, and to Chicago First Church in 1874, where John H. Johnson and O. P. Petersen had preceded him with great success. Under Johnson

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1871), 5; (1872), 13, 14, and 21. *Missionæren* (February, March, and May, 1871, and June, 1872).

<sup>12</sup> Carl F. Eltzholtz, "Reviderede Blade fra min Dagbog," *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, August 23 and December 27, 1917, and January 31, 1918.



forty souls had joined the church on trial between October and December, 1869.<sup>13</sup>

Eltzholtz's recollections of the year 1875, when he was serving First Church, indicate that he visited homes in south Chicago, finding there some thirty families, mostly Danish, and in July delivered the first sermon before an audience that would eventually become the Bethel congregation. In May he had preached in west Chicago, where some day the Kedzie and Emmaus worshipers would meet every Sunday. At the annual preachers' meeting in Leland, Eltzholtz was named as joint editor with Treider of *Hyrdestemmen* (The Shepherd's Voice), a new weekly publication for children. He made note in his diary of the admission to the Wisconsin Conference of Oluf Wiersen, Peter B. Smith, and Christian Omann, all of whom were to play stellar roles in the life of the immigrant church.

A comparison of district statistics for the years 1869 and 1876 portrays an overall growth in numbers and in property ownership. While O. P. Petersen's report of 1869 was encouraging, Haagensen's of 1876 was even more so. On the eve of his departure for Norway Petersen reported a total of ten churches and 317 members, as well as two parsonages and four Sunday schools.<sup>14</sup> Haagensen could inform the bishop seven years later that the number of congregations or churches had risen to 19, membership to 863, parsonages to 6, and Sunday schools to 15.

New preaching points within Haagensen's widespread domain were Whitewater, LaCrosse, Stockbridge, Green Bay, DePere, Oconto, North Cape, and Fond du Lac. Transferred from the Swedish mission in Illinois in 1872 were Leland and Fox River. These pioneer Illinois charges then came under the pastorate of Peter Jensen. Administrative responsibility for Chicago Second Church, on Division Street, also fell to Haagensen. So important were Illinois and Chicago becoming, from the standpoint of

<sup>13</sup> Haagensen, 54. Eltzholtz, "Reviderede Blade," *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, August 23, 1917. *Missionæren* (January, 1870).

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes*, West Wisconsin Conference (1869), 21. The Norwegian Mission District was included in the Wisconsin Conference before 1864 and after 1869, but in the West Wisconsin Conference in the intervening years.

church affairs, that Haagensen chose to hold the first district conference in Chicago in 1873.

In 1876 Haagensen was intent upon preserving his district, opposed by some of the leaders of the Wisconsin Conference. In his own words, American spokesmen who had repeatedly raised the issue of dissolution reminded him of Cato, the Roman senator, whose constant and irritating cry in the presence of his toga-clad colleagues, regardless of the subject under discussion, was, "Carthage must be destroyed!" Although the General Conference had given the Norwegian-Danish organization a new lease on life in the spring of 1876, Haagensen feared the end of a separate ministry to the immigrants, of whom only one in twenty, in his estimation, understood the English language.<sup>15</sup>

With the appearance of the monthly *Missionæren* in 1870 Norwegian-Danish Methodism entered upon a more articulate stage. Edited jointly by Haagensen and John H. Johnson, this visitor of 16 book-size pages carried the motto "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) Stressed in the foreword of the first issue (January) was the importance of the press in church affairs and the need of a foreign-language journal. Pastors were urged to submit good reading material (*Læsestof*).

Items in *Missionæren* in 1870 ranged from Haagensen's installments on "Philosophy and Religion" (January and February) and Christian Treider's presentation of the need of a seminary (August) to Haagensen's extended reply to a Lutheran attack (August to December). In the first two issues Haagensen explained how many philosophers, Pascal and Newton among them, supported Christian theology, albeit with varied and peculiar reasoning on their part. Voltaire, so often maligned by the clergy for his deism, mistaken for atheism, emphasized the orderliness of the universe and the consequent conclusion that the celestial spheres were created and sustained by a power that men call God. John Locke felt it imperative to acknowledge the light

<sup>15</sup> Haagensen, *Historie*, 73-74.

of revelation in order to supplement the distressingly inadequate efforts of the mind.

The seminary question drew attention with the announcement (January) that a committee had been formed to solicit financial support, and that Upper Iowa University and Northwestern University had offered to entertain a Norwegian-Danish department in their institutions. The fact that S. B. Newman of the Swedish Mission District of Illinois had begun to collect funds for a proposed Swedish seminary no doubt helped to spur the Norwegians and Danes.<sup>16</sup> While Karl Schou pointed up the need of a school (February), Treider, as secretary of a meeting held in Chicago's First Church on July 24, brought readers up to date on progress (August). At that meeting President Haven of Northwestern made a personal appearance to encourage "the pursuit of truth." Unanimous agreement was reached on Evanston as a site, and Schou was elected by ballot as the first teacher. Elected as directors were John H. Johnson, Andrew Haagenzen, and Peter K. Rye besides two laymen, O. M. Oren and Ole Wigdal. The October issue reported that the school had opened on September 14 with eleven students. Regarding this beginning as promising, the Wisconsin Conference committee on education recommended "that a trustee of Northwestern University be chosen from among the Norwegian brethren of this conference," whereupon Peter K. Rye was elected. A native of Norway, Rye had come under Methodist influence at Hart Prairie, joined the Rock River Conference, and in 1864 was sent by that body to supervise the Scandinavian mission, with headquarters in Copenhagen. He returned to America in 1869. Since his earlier ministry had been among Americans, he was proficient in the use of the English language. Death ended his useful career in 1873. When Karl Schou, like Rye before him, left American shores to serve as superintendent of the mission in Denmark in 1873, the educational venture in the Evanston Church suffered, with classes meeting intermittently thereafter. Not all was lost, however. Some permanence was given to the seminary ideal with the incorpora-

<sup>16</sup> *Sandebudet* (The Messenger), December 6, 1869. Cited in *Missionæren* (January, 1870).

tion of a Norwegian-Danish educational society in 1875. And Schou's arrival in Denmark did relieve Willerup for duty in the United States, from which he had been absent for 19 years.<sup>17</sup>

Although hardly germane to the school question, it is a matter of more than ordinary concern that Willerup was nearly rejected by the Wisconsin Conference. In 1874 he went to Racine but left his charge to return to his ailing wife, whom he had left in Denmark. The Wisconsin brethren, in annual session, refused to pass on his character, usually a routine procedure, until a committee of inquiry recommended his complete restoration to the fold. The committee discovered that Willerup had been granted a leave of absence by his sympathetic Racine congregation and that the presiding elder was informed of his trip in advance. Besides, the United States minister to Denmark, M. J. Cramer, volunteered some highly complimentary words in defense of Willerup's character and excellence.<sup>18</sup>

In March, 1870, the editors of *Missionæren* alluded to what they considered unfair criticism of the Methodist Episcopal Church in *Den Kirkelige Maanedstidende*, official organ of the Lutheran Wisconsin Synod. One C. J. Pedersen had taken Methodists to task, and Eltzholtz saw fit to defend his fellow communicants (July and August). Shortly thereafter Haagensen (August to December) chose to submit a full reply to an anti-Methodist book. At the conclusion of the forty-page argument, covering five issues of the paper, Haagensen disclaimed any love for strife. He would rather be at peace with all men, he said.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Haagensen, 68. *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1871), 20. *Minutes*, Rock River Conference (1873), 27. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1889), 31. *Missionæren* (April, 1873).

<sup>18</sup> *Minutes*, Wisconsin Conference (1874), 9 and (1875), 6, 12, and 28. *Missionæren* (May, 1874).

<sup>19</sup> C. J. Pedersen, "Forskjel mellem Lutheranere og Methodister" (The difference between Lutherans and Methodists), *Den Kirkelige Maanedstidende* (The monthly times of the church), February 15, 1870. Haagensen, "Gjenmæle til Hr. Müller Eggens Angreb mod Methodistkirken, angaaende Kristelig Fuldkommenhed og Skrøbelighedssynd" (Reply to Mr. Müller Eggen's attack against the Methodist Church concerning Christian Perfection and the Sins of Weakness). Eggen's book was entitled *Foredrag mod Methodisterne over Skrøbelighedssynd og Kristelig Fuldkommenhed* (Lectures against the Methodists on the Sins of Weakness and on Christian Perfection).



So *Missionæren* came to the close of its first year.

Over in Minnesota and Iowa the work of the Scandinavian District, authorized by the Minnesota Conference in 1859, continued to prosper, but slowly. With the Sioux uprising of 1862 and the war between the states in the background, places like Swan Lake, Scandia Grove, St. Peter, Lake Elizabeth, Belvidere, Newburg, and Grand Meadow, all in Minnesota, assumed new importance. In Iowa, Washington Prairie and Big Canoe were holding their own. Over this large district C. G. Forsberg, a Swede, presided from 1863 to 1869. At the close of his six-year term he could report 13 charges, ten pastors, ten churches, and 519 members, not including 208 probationers.<sup>20</sup>

Yet progress was far from spectacular in the Scandinavian District, and a conference committee urged some readjustments in administration. Difficulties had arisen between the Swedes and the Norwegians. No new men had lately joined the ministerial ranks. But the Minnesota Conference spurned the committee's recommendations and approved the appointment of another Swede, C. F. Lindquist, as presiding elder. In the opinion of Andrew Haagensen, the conference hoped that time would settle the Scandinavian problems.<sup>21</sup>

At its Winona session of 1872 the Minnesota Conference heard a fresh committee report on the Scandinavian mission, actually a divided report, since the members were in disagreement on proposals for the future. Bishop Gilbert Haven then exercised his authority and divided the Scandinavian District along lines of nationality. When for the first time, in the Minnesota-Iowa area, the bishop called "the Norwegian District" prior to reading the appointments, there were understandably some quite audible "Amens" and "Thank Gods" from the Norwegians. "And why not?" inquires Haagensen. "After thirteen years under Swedish domination the Norwegians and Danes have their own household

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes*, Minnesota Conference (1869), 19.

<sup>21</sup> Hobart, *History of Methodism in Minnesota*, 304-305. Witting, 479. Haagensen, 36-38. *Minutes*, Minnesota Conference (1869), 29.

given to them.”<sup>22</sup> Shortly, O. G. Gunderson came from Illinois to lead the Swedish District, while John H. Johnson, coming from Racine, performed the same function for the Norwegian District.

Under Johnson’s inspiring guidance the quadrennium from 1872 to 1876 produced remarkable results for the new district. Beginning humbly with four pastors and 420 members, the Minnesota-Iowa statistics by 1876 indicated a total of 13 pastors and 782 members, together with 19 local preachers, 18 congregations or preaching points, and 18 Sunday schools serving 515 pupils.<sup>23</sup> But money was scarcer than usual, what with depression years beginning with a financial panic in 1873.

Johnson made his home at Decorah, Iowa, and served the Washington Prairie circuit the first year. Since the organization of Washington Prairie by O. P. Petersen in 1852, the first Norwegian mission west of the Mississippi, many other places had come into focus. Shifts in population in time erased most of them from the Norwegian-Danish Methodist blackboard. One wonders what happened to places like Round Prairie, Minnesota, near the Iowa border, where 50 people became charter members in 1870. Some, like Washington Prairie, were of greater importance than others while they lasted. Here were converted and inspired to reply, “Here am I, send me,” two of the more outstanding men of later years, Asle Knudsen and James Sanaker. Knudsen, father of the distinguished theologian, Albert C. Knudson of Boston University, felt the call in 1868 under the preaching of Arne Johnsen. Sanaker’s experience came later, developing from contacts with American Methodists in Freeport, Iowa. Knudsen, one of the grand old men of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, began his long ministry at Grand Meadow, Minnesota, in 1872 and built a church at nearby Long Creek (later Millville) the following year.<sup>24</sup>

It is sometimes the case that a personal diary speaks more clearly

<sup>22</sup> *Minutes*, Minnesota Conference (1872), 11, 14 ff., and 36. Haagensen, 38-39.

<sup>23</sup> Hobart, *Methodism in Minnesota*, 309. Johnson in *Missionæren* (October, 1876).

<sup>24</sup> *Missionæren* (May, 1870). Obituary in *Evangelisk Tidende*, October 26, 1939.

and eloquently than a strictly factual account. Christopher Christophersen, who came to Iowa from Norway as a young man of 26 in 1868, tells of being warned in friendly fashion against coming into contact with Methodists. Curiosity prevailed, however, and through the ministry of Halvor Garden he "found the long sought peace" after attending a summer camp meeting at Big Canoe (later Locust). In 1874 John H. Johnson appointed him as local preacher to supply the Minnesota circuit of St. Peter, Scandia Grove, and Swan Lake, where for three years he and his family made the best of things without a parsonage and even without a church in which to worship. Following his acceptance into the Minnesota Conference in 1877, he completed another three years at Lake Elizabeth—Lake Lillian—Atwater. Two small sons and one of Christophersen's brothers died in that place from diphtheria. The year 1880 found this courageous man in Deer Park and Grantsburg, Wisconsin. He makes no complaint of the 60 miles separating the two charges. Before Christophersen's two years were up, the congregation purchased four lots from the Omaha Railroad Company for a church and a parsonage. The cost of the lots was a hundred dollars, which was half-price.<sup>25</sup>

By Christophersen's time Grantsburg and Deer Park were already active Methodist centers. As early as 1863 Andreas Andersen and his wife and family of eight children settled near Grantsburg. The oldest son, Peter, wrote many years later at the age of 81, "My three brothers, four sisters, and myself, and our families were the first members of the Methodist church at Grantsburg, and they that are living are still members." Organized in 1866, the faithful Scandinavians built a church in 1871. When the Minnesota Conference divided the Scandinavian work into two districts in 1872, Grantsburg was allotted to the Swedes. Norwegians withdrew and formed their own society at Willow River (later Deer Park) in 1874.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Christopher Christophersen, "Brudstykker av min Livshistorie og Missionsarbeide," *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, August 26, 1915. When Christophersen died in 1915, John M. Beckstrøm found these sketches among his papers and submitted them to the *Talsmand*.

<sup>26</sup> Peter A. Andersen in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, February 11, 1904. *Missionæren* (August, 1875). The article in *Missionæren* speaks of the erection of a church at

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Activity in the Lake Elizabeth—Lake Lillian area, of which Christophersen writes, had begun in 1860 when Arne Johnsen, another whom Petersen had been instrumental in winning, was assigned to the then Crow River mission. Not until 1872, however, would the Lake Elizabeth—Lake Lillian charge appear in the list of conference appointments. More important in the future would be Forest City, Minneapolis, and St. Paul. Arne Johnsen succeeded in forming 17 members into a congregation at Forest City, Iowa, in 1866, though a permanent structure was not dedicated until 1874. This church, it is said, was the first such edifice to be built in Winnebago County.<sup>27</sup>

The Minneapolis congregation, organized by presiding elder John H. Johnson in 1873, owed its beginning to several families coming from Lake Elizabeth and Newburg. Most of them were spiritual children of Halvor H. Holland, a superannuated pastor on the Lake Elizabeth charge. Holland also was probably the first Norwegian Methodist to preach in Minneapolis, in the spring of 1873. He was followed by Ole Jacobsen, fresh from assisting O. P. Petersen at the Bethelship in New York, and by L. A. Larsen, under whom a remodelled dwelling was acquired as a meeting place. The permanent structure on 13th Avenue South and 9th Street had to wait until the 1880's.<sup>28</sup>

During the first 20 years of Scandinavian Methodism in St. Paul Norwegians and Swedes worshiped together. But the creation of a Norwegian district in 1872 resulted in separate congregations, the Norwegians then coming under the ministry of Nils Christophersen, who was then riding the Rush River circuit in Wisconsin. The St. Paul congregation dates from 1873, starting with six members.<sup>29</sup> In 1875, under Ole Jacobsen, this nucleus first rented

Deer Park in 1875, several years before the arrival of Christophersen. Perhaps this was the original structure, to be replaced in the 1880's.

<sup>27</sup> *Missionæren* (January, 1875).

<sup>28</sup> *Missionæren* (September, 1873 and January, 1876). Haagensen, *Historie*, 85. "History of the First Norwegian-Danish M.E. Church, Minneapolis," *Evangelisk Tidende*, December 20, 1923; this article on the occasion of the 50th anniversary was submitted by three laymen: Talis Christiansen, Nicolai Aasnes, and John N. Thomsen.

<sup>29</sup> Hobart, *Methodism in Minnesota*, 307. Witting, 474 and 481. *Missionæren* (February, 1876).



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a hall, then purchased a church and a parsonage, both of which were moved in 1878 to the corner of 13th Street and Broadway.

In 1876 the Norwegian mission under the Minnesota Conference was divided into two districts, the Minnesota with Nils Christophersen as presiding elder and the Iowa with Amund Olsen Ulland. John H. Johnson became presiding elder of the Norwegian District in the Wisconsin Conference. Before his transfer he wrote optimistically in *Missionæren* (October, 1875): "Never before in the history of Norwegian Methodism have so many doors been opened and so many calls for evangelistic preaching been received. Old prejudices are slowly lifting under the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, and the traditional man-made creeds are giving way to the story of the Cross."

The division of the Minnesota mission became advisable for two reasons. First, the field of activity had spread geographically throughout Minnesota, as well as portions of Wisconsin and Iowa, and even into Nebraska and Dakota Territory. Secondly, the number of societies requiring pastoral care had grown very perceptibly. An enumeration of the appointments in 1876 will illustrate:

### *Minnesota District*

#### Minnesota:

St. Paul and Minneapolis	L. A. Larsen
Plainview	Arne Johnsen
St. Peter and Scandia Grove	Christopher Christophersen
Lake Elizabeth and Sauk Center	E. Endresen
Faribault and Holden	Ole Jacobsen

#### Wisconsin:

Rush River	Nils Christophersen
Red Wing, Belvidere, and Hartland	(also presiding elder) Engebret Arvesen
Willow River and Grantsburg	A. Petersen

### *Iowa District*

#### Iowa:

Forest City	Amund Olsen Ulland
Washington Prairie and Big Canoe	(also presiding elder) Asle Knudsen
Lansing (with Round Prairie, Minnesota)	John Jacobsen

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### Minnesota:

Newburg and South Fork  
Grand Meadow and LeRoy

Oliver L. Hansen  
H. A. Holgersen (supply)

### Wisconsin:

LaCrosse and Coon Prairie  
Richland, Primrose, and High-  
land

Christian Omann  
Martinus Nelson (supply)

### Dakota Territory:

Vermillion, Daneville, and Say-  
brook L. H. Petersen

If the Northwest Iowa Conference were included, additional preaching points might be mentioned. As early as 1867 Engebret Arvesen and P. A. More, both of the Minnesota Conference, travelled their respective missions in Iowa and Dakota. In 1873 John C. Brown, the pioneer of Leland, Illinois, made his home in Nevada, Iowa, in response to a call from Methodists who had formerly lived in Denmark and Racine. Shortly thereafter Brown's mission circuit embraced Nevada, Boone, Story City, Grantstown, Marshalltown, and Des Moines. Before Brown's death in 1875 the work extended also to Dakota Territory, where Danish Methodists had organized a class in 1873 at Daneville (later Viborg, South Dakota), after having held union meetings with Danish Baptists for a time.<sup>30</sup>

While accounts of new fields and many personal commitments are inspiring, the story of the successful struggle of a single soul is not without its appeal. It will be recalled that one Hans Valder had organized at Leland, Illinois, the first Norwegian Baptist congregation in 1848. Hardships and intellectual doubtings, occasioned in part by Robert G. Ingersoll's devastating criticism of current religious views, caused Valder to surrender his pulpit and leave the church. Valder then led a company of landseekers to Fillmore County, Minnesota, in 1853. There on his own homestead he founded a hamlet and named it Newburg. A gifted man, and interested in public affairs, he was twice elected to the Min-

<sup>30</sup> *Missionæren* (September, 1873). N. S. Lawdahl, *De Danske Baptisters Historie i Amerika* (Morgan Park, Illinois, 1909), 365.

nesota state legislature. For many years, it is said, he attended no church. Finally he began to accompany his wife, a member of the Norwegian Methodist congregation in Newburg, and in 1879, under Asle Knudsen's gentle guidance, returned to his former convictions. Although not a member, he became very active in the church. Several of his children joined the flock, and one of his daughters married an American Methodist preacher.<sup>31</sup>

The General Conference of 1876 endorsed several measures favorable to the Norwegian missions. It approved financial grants for continuing the publication of *Missionæren* and for beginning the printing of tracts and Sunday school literature in the Norwegian-Danish language. Secondly, the conference recognized the growth of Methodism in Norway by allowing the mission there to organize into an annual conference. Further, Scandinavian missions in New York and Brooklyn and the vicinity became the responsibility of the New York East Conference. Finally, certain boundary changes were made, uniting in the Minnesota Conference all Norwegian-Danish work in the general area (Minnesota, West Wisconsin, Upper Iowa, and Northwest Iowa Conferences) and transferring the Norwegian-speaking faithful of the Rock River Conference in Illinois to the Wisconsin Conference. But the Norwegian District in Wisconsin almost lost its life before it was born. It was largely owing to Andrew Haagensen's efforts, after the General Conference sessions, that it was preserved. Wavering under pressure from the American side, Bishop Thomas Bowman was finally convinced by the well-informed Haagensen that, were the district dissolved, a technical breach of Methodist discipline would have been committed.<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding the encouraging beginnings in Wisconsin in 1876-77 (Mauston, Neenah, and Oshkosh) and in Michigan (Escanaba and Manistee), perhaps the most climactic development of those late-depression years was the personal evangelism of Otto J. Sanaker in Leland and Norway, Illinois, from 1877 to 1880.

<sup>31</sup> P. Stiansen, *History of the Norwegian Baptists in America* (Wheaton, Illinois, 1939), 21-33. Interview of John J. Wang with Asle Knudsen.

<sup>32</sup> Haagensen, 69 and 73. *Minutes, Wisconsin Conference* (1876), 24. J. M. Reid, *Missions and Missionary Society*, I, 429.

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Young Sanaker made his decision for a more vital Christian witness in the American Methodist church of Orion, Wisconsin, in 1867. As a member of another American church at Freeport, Iowa, he became licensed to preach. While studying at Northwestern University he served Chicago Second Church with marked distinction. The revival at Leland during Christmas vacation in 1877 precipitated his decision to discontinue his formal education, at least for the time being. For ten weeks the meetings ensued, with two services each day. In March seven weeks of meetings began in nearby Norway, with corresponding success in terms of new life and new members. After summer camp meetings throughout the circuit, a thousand persons gathered for the fall quarterly meeting at Leland.<sup>33</sup>

Otto Sanaker's reappointment to the Illinois charges in 1878, the moving of the church at Fox River to the village of Norway, a continuing reception of new members, and a number of baptisms all mark the next year as unusually busy and productive. The fact that some adults were among those baptized suggests that the parents had been of Quaker faith and had therefore not presented their infants for the sacrament. Among those baptized in 1880 was Peter Cornelius Nelson, son of a Quaker father. From Peter's home came eleven sons and daughters who were to take places of responsibility and honor in American Methodist congregations. Meanwhile, Otto's brother James was serving as assistant pastor with him. In 1880 Otto's footsteps and talents made their way to Cambridge, Wisconsin. There, while working with his customary intensity, his health gave away. He was called from his labors at the youthful age of 31.<sup>34</sup>

Toward the close of the 1870's the prospect of organizing a separate conference within American Methodism improved.

<sup>33</sup> A letter of Nels E. Simonsen to James Sanaker, dated June 1, 1927, explains that, according to the university records, Otto J. Sanaker entered in December, 1873, and did not return in January, 1878. He had studied Latin, Greek, mathematics, history, and philosophy. A course in theology was taken at Garrett Biblical Institute. His grades were high. See also *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, January 12, February 19, May 7, and September 17, 1878.

<sup>34</sup> *The Norse-American Centennial of Illinois, 1825-1925* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1925), 25 ff. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1881), 37.



Doubtless the General Conference of 1876 intended fresh encouragement toward Norwegian-Danish activity by continuing to subsidize *Missionæren* and by approving more realistic boundaries in the fast-developing Great Lakes and trans-Mississippi areas. If the decade had been weak in dollars, it had proved to be strong in men, both as leaders and as loyal followers. With the sound of warfare barely stilled at home, and with revolutions and wars abroad, the trend of the times was inevitably toward moral disorder and spiritual decline. It was in a period of wholesale scandal in America that Norwegian-Danish leadership chose to raise the voice of warning and, at the same time, herald the good news of personal redemption in ever widening circles.

## *The Conference Is Born*

ASTRONOMERS SAY that light from even the nearest stars takes many years to reach the earth. If one imagines the light rays being reversed in their direction, emanating from our planet and eventually penetrating outer space, the drama that took place in Racine, Wisconsin, in the year 1880 would not yet be visible to anyone in the more distant stellar universe. Not enough time has elapsed for the image of over 80 years ago to become discernible in the almost infinite limits of space. Only to the earthbound mind do the participants in the scenes of three generations ago belong to a distant past. In the broader perspective of time the Norwegian-Danish Conference, known originally as the Northwest Norwegian Conference, held its first session only yesterday.

As has been seen, prior to the founding of the Norwegian-Danish Conference certain districts of the parent Wisconsin and Minnesota Conferences were designated as Norwegian. At a preachers' meeting of the Norwegian District of the Wisconsin Conference in 1878 at Neenah it was moved that another district be created because of the expansion of the missionary work among Norwegian and Danish immigrants. It was further decided that efforts be made to secure Norwegian or Danish delegates to the forthcoming quadrennial General Conference from both the Wisconsin and the Minnesota Conferences.<sup>1</sup>

In recognition of expansion of the foreign-language mission the Wisconsin Conference in 1878 divided the Norwegian District into a Chicago District and a Milwaukee District. John H. Johnson and O. P. Petersen were appointed presiding elders. In addition, Johnson was named pastor of First Church, Chicago, and Petersen pastor in Milwaukee. Petersen had recently been transferred from the New York East Conference. Bishop Randolph S. Foster, congratulating Johnson on his report, declared, "This is the best I have heard out here in the West." American districts

<sup>1</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 28, 1878.

had showed no gains in 1877-78, while the Norwegian District had acquired 67 members, and 30 more on probation. On the debit side, even if unmentioned in Johnson's report, he had lost the invaluable services of Carl F. Eltzholtz, who had been most effective as an evangelist in Evanston and Chicago Second Church but had now (May, 1878) accepted Karl Schou's invitation to the mission in Denmark.<sup>2</sup>

Independent of a joint meeting of all Norwegian and Danish pastors at Red Wing, Minnesota, in 1879, and prior to the meeting of the Wisconsin Conference in that year, Andrew Haagensen, then serving Racine and North Cape, presented anew some arguments in favor of establishing a separate conference.<sup>3</sup> He observed that German and Swedish Methodists in America were making more satisfactory progress since they had organized their own annual conferences. The shifting of pastors in the four Norwegian districts had been awkward and cumbersome, he continued. Moreover, bishops tended to devote their time to the English-speaking work and to slight the Scandinavian. And now that the weekly advocate, *Den Christelige Talsmand* (begun in 1877), the printing press, and plans for a permanent theological seminary were matters of common concern, it would be more practical to administer the districts through a single conference. Finally, said Haagensen, many of the foreign-born pastors could not speak English very well. Others would not participate in discussion on the conference floor even if they spoke English creditably. Supporting Haagensen was Christian Treider, editor of *Den Christelige Talsmand*. Even the very existence of a weekly publication of their own contributed much toward a sense of solidarity among the Norwegian and Danish Methodists. Realizing that the Norwegian mission had outgrown its usefulness in its present form,

<sup>2</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, October 15, 1878. While in Denmark, from 1878 to 1887, Eltzholtz assumed also the leadership of the Danish temperance movement. From the original organization of a society at Veile in 1879, temperance forces reached the remarkable figure of 200,000 members by 1917. *Afholds-Basunen* (The Temperance Trumpet), published by Eltzholtz, played a major part in temperance success. A revision of his diary, terminating with the year 1887, appears in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* from August 30, 1917, to January 31, 1918.

<sup>3</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 2, 1879.

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the Minnesota Conference, meeting in annual session, memorialized the General Conference in the following lengthy yet concise resolution:<sup>4</sup>

*Whereas*, our Norwegian brethren are convinced that their needs demand a separation from the American work, and *whereas*, steps have already been taken at a union meeting of the Norwegian districts of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Minnesota, looking to such a separation; and *whereas* our Norwegian brethren are desirous that at this session of the Minnesota Conference some action should be taken preliminary to the coming General Conference, *therefore*, resolved that though the relations of the Norwegians to the American brethren in this Conference have been for many years the most happy and fraternal, yet our judgment is that the interest of the Norwegian work would be better served if they should be organized into a separate Annual Conference, and we respectfully petition the ensuing General Conference to take into consideration the expediency of such a separate organization.

The General Conference met, according to custom, in the month of May in 1880. It appears that the leadership there continued, for the time being, to view the Swedish-Norwegian-Danish work as one, since they named a seven-man committee to study and help solve the problems of the "Scandinavian mission." Included on the committee were A. J. Anderson of the Northwest Swedish Conference and John H. Johnson, whom the Wisconsin Conference had graciously elected as its delegate. With the recommendation of this committee, and supported by petitions, the General Conference made provision for the Norwegian mission to be organized as the Northwest Norwegian Conference. By action of the General Conference of 1884 the name was changed to the Norwegian and Danish Conference, in recognition of the active participation of Danish pastors and layfolk. As host pastor for the first annual conference session in 1880 Andrew Haagensen urged pastors to let him know whether they would attend. Wives were also invited.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Minutes*, Minnesota Conference (1879), 26.

<sup>5</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 18 and July 6, 1880. For the approval of the change of name see *Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (1884), 410.



## THE CONFERENCE IS BORN

"The Norwegian-Danish Methodist preachers of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Conferences met in Racine's Methodist Episcopal Church on September 9, 1880, at 9 o'clock in the morning under the chairmanship of Bishop W. L. Harris." So reads the opening sentence of the first minutes of the new annual conference. The bishop read Luke 22, the account of the disciples and the last supper, and the betrayal of Jesus by Judas. Then holy communion was administered. Proceeding to business, 21 members in full connection had their names called. Since this was the initial meeting, their names are of special interest to posterity:<sup>6</sup>

Ole Peter Petersen  
Peter Jensen  
Peter B. Smith  
Carl F. Eltzholtz  
Arne Johnsen  
Asle Knudsen  
John Jacobsen  
Andrew Haagenzen  
Oliver L. Hansen  
Axel Gustafson  
Jens J. Christensen

Ole Jacobsen  
Engebret Arvesen  
Christopher Christophersen  
Christian Treider  
Oluf Amandus Wiersen  
Karl Schou  
Lewis A. Larsen  
Amund Olsen  
Martinus Nelson  
Nils Christophersen

Short of apostolic succession, or the laying on of hands, there are lines of spiritual descent traceable in the ministerial column of 1880. Here one must depend mainly upon Haagenzen's memory, as he compiled his history in 1894. Haagenzen himself relied partially upon reports in the American yearbooks. It was his deliberate purpose to write objectively, employing the third person even in reference to himself, yet his presentation carries the warmth of many personal allusions. One of his techniques, if such it may be called, is to insert a thumbnail sketch of the earlier life of each new pastor as he is introduced.

<sup>6</sup> Retired and not present were O. Helland, Halvor H. Holland, and Carl P. Agrelius. Haagenzen states (*Historie*, p. 96) that Karl Schou and Jens J. Christensen were active in Denmark as missionaries and were not present at Racine. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 5. The exact title of this publication is *Protokol over Forhandlinger i den Nordvestlige Norske Aarskonference af den Methodist Episcopal Kirke. Første Sammenkomst* (Chicago, 1880). In 1885 "Norske og Danske" (changed in 1890 to "Norsk-Danske") was substituted for "Nordvestlige Norske." For the sake of simplicity and uniformity the titles will usually be reduced to *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference.

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An examination of the charter membership of 1880 discloses the preponderant influence of O. P. Petersen in persuading younger men to enter the ministry. First among his "disciples" is Haagensen, but Engebret Arvesen, Arne Johnsen, and Peter Jensen are not far behind. These men in turn were instrumental in bringing others to the point of decision for full time Christian service. Haagensen had at least a hand in assisting John H. Johnson, unofficial wartime chaplain, toward a long and fruitful evangelistic career in Wisconsin and Chicago. Arvesen, while yet in Norway, influenced Oliver L. Hansen. To Arne Johnsen's fatherly guidance Asle Knudsen and Christopher Christophersen owed their decisions, Halvor Garden also being effective in determining the lifework of Christophersen. Peter Jensen, one of the leading personalities of the new Norwegian-Danish Conference, played a large part in bringing Oluf Wiersen and Nels E. Simonsen into the ranks, although Simonsen, longtime head of the theological seminary of later years, was also deeply impressed by Christian Treider's appeal.

It should be noted that Treider and Eltzholtz had turned to Methodism and the Christian pulpit in their homeland, Denmark, where they yielded to the message of Christian B. Willerup. Similarly, Martinus Nelson, later prominent in missionary activities in Utah and the Far West, came under the influence of Willerup and others both in Denmark and Norway. Willerup's role, like Petersen's, is impressive in securing ministerial candidates.

Another source of ministerial timber is to be found in American Methodism. Here apply the names of Karl Schou, Lewis A. Larsen, John Jacobsen, and James and Otto Sanaker. Schou joined the Methodists in Lafayette, Indiana, and presumably received his inspiration toward the ministry there. Larsen's determining experience came in Belvidere, Minnesota, Jacobsen's in Grand Meadow, Minnesota, and the Sanakers' in Orion, Wisconsin, and Freeport, Iowa.

Finally, the Scandinavian Bethelship mission and other seamen's missions in the East helped to augment the pioneer ministerial ranks. Nils Christophersen, Ole Jacobsen, and Peter B. Smith belong to this group. Christophersen had encountered Agrelius, inti-

mate friend of Olof Hedström of the Bethelship. He had also met John Tidlund, whose life had been touched by the work of Father Taylor in Boston. Ole Jacobsen, coming from a Haugean home in Norway, was permanently inspired by a conversion experience in Hedström's mission. And P. B. Smith is likewise said by Haagen-sen to have found his spiritual footing in New York, probably in the same Bethelship environment. Only the names of Axel Gustafson (Swedish), John Christensen (Danish), and Amund Olsen seem to be neglected in Haagen-sen's thoughtful publication.

The routine and the agenda of the first annual conference session varied little from the procedure of later years. The bar of the conference was set at the third window from the pulpit. At the opening session two visiting pastors of the Wisconsin Conference were introduced. In the course of the four-day meeting several other pastors were presented, including two from the Northwest Swedish Conference, a neighboring Congregational minister, and the city missionary. Standing committees were created. Disciplinary questions in the order required in the *Methodist Discipline* were interspersed by the bishop throughout the sessions. Motions were adopted, one resulting in a rule that no man over 40 could be received into the conference and that a man who was accepted must be sound in both body and soul.<sup>7</sup>

Next came reports by presiding elders. John H. Johnson, who prepared the report for the Chicago District, had been appointed to Norway and was not present. Secretary Christian Treider read Johnson's paper. In Leland and Norway, Illinois, said Johnson, the Sanaker brothers, Otto and James, had labored very successfully the past three years. Treider himself had informed readers of the *Talsmand* of their camp meetings in Leland. Results could not really be measured, Treider had said, but 110 people came to the altar on the opening Sunday. Ultimately 32 joined the church in full connection and 14 joined as probationers. Johnson as presiding elder had also reported in the *Talsmand* the dedication of a new church in Norway, Illinois, the old building being retained as a part of the new. At the morning service on dedication Sunday

<sup>7</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 7.

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(December 15, 1878) 23 were received into full membership. "The outlook is hopeful," concluded Johnson.<sup>8</sup>

Camp meetings were a matter of special concern to Treider. At one time he inserted a column on the subject of suitable preparation for such meetings.<sup>9</sup> Camp meetings were not intended as picnics, he began. Rules should be observed. Select the best site. Arrange furniture properly. Have waterproof tents, both for living quarters and for the services. Provide adequate lighting, enough kerosene lamps. When it may be advisable, to prevent disturbance from the curious and the boisterous in the neighborhood, arrange to have police nearby. Booths or other places of business on the grounds should be under control of the camp meeting management. For the services of worship the motto ought to be "Glorify the Lord." Worshipers should not gather in groups in the woods but should meet in the main tent for common worship.

To return to Johnson's report, Evanston had a large church and parsonage but only a small congregation, composed for the most part of working girls, many of whom were employed in the homes of the well-to-do. Other preaching points mentioned were Second Church in Chicago; a new church near Humboldt Park (Kedzie), affiliated with Second Church; a new mission in Hyde Park in South Chicago (Bethel); and finally Johnson's own First Church.

O. P. Petersen was present to speak for the Milwaukee District.<sup>10</sup> For a presiding elder who must also serve the Milwaukee congregation the district was too large, he believed, but otherwise too small without the Milwaukee pulpit. The DePere-Fort Howard-Stockbridge-Sturgeon Bay circuit in Wisconsin was "a big field of labor" for a man without a horse, yet Oluf A. Wiersen had worked in it faithfully for three years. Wiersen supported his wife and four children during the past year on a salary of \$350, from which house rent and traveling expenses had to be subtracted. In spite of financial stringency, Wiersen brought to the annual conference "a tolerably good missionary collection."

<sup>8</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 28 and December 24, 1878. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 8.

<sup>9</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 17, 1879.

<sup>10</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 9-12.



Petersen went on to speak of Neenah-Oshkosh as one of the new missions. Manitowoc and Sheboygan had beautiful church structures but few members. Manistee, Michigan, was still a new field. The big Wisconsin circuit of Cambridge-Stoughton-Oconomowoc-Ashippun required rearrangement. Whitewater and Hart Prairie, according to Petersen, were "hard places." In Milwaukee, his own charge, he paid a young man from his own salary but did not wish to do so again. He hoped that the bishop would appoint a full time man to Milwaukee. Petersen's report referred to Racine Trinity as having been a self-supporting church for about ten years and as one of the oldest and most solid in the conference. Haagensen had been pastor there the past two years. Concerning pastors' salaries, few had received what they deserved. Petersen hoped that the Methodist Church would continue to encourage the Norwegian and Danish work financially. In return he promised, "We will by the grace of God endeavor to Christianize and Americanize our countrymen who come here every year by the thousands seeking homes among us." In conclusion, the founder of Methodism in Norway and co-founder with Christian B. Willerup of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America expressed pleasure over the presence of Bishop William L. Harris but warned him, perhaps with a twinkle in his eye, that he would need a great deal of Christian patience, like that of a father whose children have been somewhat neglected. It may be doubted whether the bishop caught the full meaning of this good natured remark in a Nordic tongue.

For the Minnesota District Nils Christophersen reported rather briefly.<sup>11</sup> Deer Park and Hartland, both in Wisconsin, had conducted successful camp meetings. A new church was completed in Grantsburg. A church structure was being planned for the Lake Elizabeth circuit. Last fall a class of 17 members was organized in a new Norwegian community "far out in the West." Other circuits and stations listed in the table of statistics for the Minnesota District, without particular mention in Christophersen's report, were St. Paul, Faribault, Minneapolis, Red Wing, Rush River circuit, Willow River circuit, Plainview circuit, Scandia Grove circuit, and Montevideo.

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880)*, 12.

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Next came Amund Olsen's report for the Iowa District, which stretched from Madison, Wisconsin, to Yankton, Dakota Territory.<sup>12</sup> Camp meetings had been held in four places in the month of June, said Olsen, with souls being converted. Property improvements in Newburg, Minnesota, and Forest City and Washington Prairie in Iowa were considered encouraging, even if \$300 was the total expense. Lansing, Iowa, paid off over \$200 on its church debt, and Washington Prairie over \$140. As mission points, most congregations could not raise much money for benevolences. Olsen was glad that during four years on the Iowa District, necessitating 7,000 miles of travel annually, his health, once poor, had actually improved.

It has been mentioned that the work of Amund Olsen extended as far west as Yankton. His report of 1880 credits Marius J. Pihl with having built a little church in Daneville, Dakota Territory, free of debt and with four acres of land. Pihl, a Dane and previously a member of an American congregation in Chicago, had supplied Grand Meadow, Minnesota, for a year. His was the first Norwegian-Danish Methodist church, mainly Danish, in Dakota. A church at Vermillion, in the same circuit, was then under construction.

Olsen had firsthand knowledge of the Dakota country since 1878. In that year he had traveled to Vermillion as well as to Sioux City, Iowa. He saw the need of more permanent missionary work and appealed to young men to volunteer for such duty. Unable to make his rounds in 1879 because of poor health, Olsen prevailed upon Asle Knudsen to visit certain preaching points in Dakota and to conduct communion services and quarterly conferences. Telling editor Treider of his journey, Knudsen stated that two charges, Daneville and Sioux City, were under the pastoral care of John Jacobsen. Both places were in need of church buildings. In Daneville the members met in homes. In Sioux City a Presbyterian church, seating 300 people, was rented. On the occasion of Knudsen's Sunday visit it was all but filled to capacity for each of three services. He wished that a man supported by the board of missions

<sup>12</sup> *Minutes, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880)*, 13.

could be appointed there. For reasons not entirely clear, even if constant westward migration is recognized, Sioux City never developed into a strong Norwegian-Danish Methodist center.<sup>13</sup>

A story concerning the personality of Asle Knudsen is tempting to relate. When he died in 1939, at the advanced age of 95, his distinguished son, Albert C. Knudson, remarked upon his father's sense of humor. The son told of one of his father's early experiences in what is now North Dakota.<sup>14</sup> Said Dean Knudson, "He enjoyed the humorous side of life. He could regale his friends by the hour with mirth-provoking stories from his own experience. He was particularly fond of withholding his identity from people who had known or heard of him but did not recognize him, and then later surprising and at times embarrassing them by making himself known. In a little Norwegian community in North Dakota father once called on a family who had come from Hallingdal in Norway but did not recognize him. In the course of the conversation the father and mother said that a neighbor boy by the name of Asle Knudsen had gone to America, and they wondered what had become of him. They had heard that he had joined a heretical sect and was going about preaching false doctrines. They were sorry, they said, for he was a promising young man." After he told them that he was the man in question they invited him to remain and conduct a meeting in their home, which he did. The key to Asle Knudsen's effectiveness as a pioneer preacher might well be discovered in his son's significant observation: "Father had no special interest in theology as such. Religion with him was a life, not a theory." One might even suspect a relationship between the father's faith in the practical, on the one hand, and the personalism of his son on the other.

At the first annual conference session standing committees presented their reports on the third and fourth days. To take an example, the committee for supporting the Freedmen's Aid Society suggested a "collection," which totalled \$48. One gathers that the

<sup>13</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 7, 1878 and August 12, 1879.

<sup>14</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende*, October 26, 1939. Dean Knudson further stated, "During the forty-six years that have passed since I left home he wrote me regularly every week or two, always in Norwegian and always with a firm hand."

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Civil War clouds had not entirely disappeared. The temperance committee offered the following resolution: "That no one who drinks should become or remain a member of the church. That no one who uses tobacco should be accepted into the ministry. That the bishop put the questions of drinking and smoking to candidates for the ministry. That pastors use their influence upon lay members." Bishop William L. Harris congratulated the committee on its firm stand. Actually, the General Conference had already determined that candidates for membership in annual conferences must refrain from the use of tobacco.<sup>15</sup>

The report of the committee on education contained a far-sighted plea for an enlightened ministry. Its members (Haagensen, Treider, and Arne Johnsen) began with this statement: "Since religion without understanding leads to fanaticism, and science without religion leads to atheism, there can be no doubt concerning the necessity of a thoroughly converted and educated ministry."<sup>16</sup> Over \$3,300 had already been raised for an educational fund, to make possible the establishment of a theological seminary. In addition, one person had willed \$2,000 and another his life insurance to the fund. The committee recommended, in part, that pastors present to their parishioners the need of larger offerings for educational purposes; that the secretary of the board of trustees provide suitable collection banks for all congregations; that local committees on education be responsible for securing the banks from the homes and reporting to their quarterly conferences on the amount of money collected; that a theological school should be opened as soon as the board could provide a teacher; and, that the following men, four pastors and three laymen, should serve as trustees for the ensuing year: Arne Johnsen, O. P. Petersen, Andrew Haagensen, Oluf Wiersen, Ivar Olsen, W. Mortensen, and O. Guldbrandsen.

A number of matters pertaining to the status of conference personnel were acted upon in 1880. The following were accepted on trial, or ministerial probation: Frederick W. Ericksen, James Ped-

<sup>15</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 20-27.

<sup>16</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 25.



ersen, Bengt C. Olin, Nels A. Qvale, and O. T. Olsen. Continued on trial were Henry Danielsen, Marius J. Pihl, James Sanaker, and J. deLorent Thompson. Otto J. Sanaker was admitted in full connection. Transferred in from the New York East Conference were Burrel Smith and Bernt Johannesen, while Martin Hansen came from the conference in Norway. Transferred out were Christian Treider and Frederick Ericksen to the New York East Conference. Both were subsequently appointed to Norwegian-Danish churches, Treider to Brooklyn and Ericksen to Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Christopher Christophersen was made supernumerary. Engebret Arvesen was continued as supernumerary.<sup>17</sup>

Statistics from the yearbook of 1880 reveal that the new conference had a total of 43 congregations and 2,266 members in full connection, distributed rather evenly over four districts. The four-district organization was presently discontinued when the cabinet, composed of Bishop Harris and the four presiding elders, decided in favor of two districts, one centered in Chicago and the other in St. Paul. Appointments in 1880 were made accordingly:<sup>18</sup>

#### CHICAGO DISTRICT

O. P. Petersen, *Presiding Elder*

Chicago First Church	Martin Hansen
Chicago Second Church	James Sanaker
Chicago South Side (Hyde Park)	Supplied by Nels E. Simonsen
Evanston	Andrew Haagenen
Leland, Norway, and Lee	Oluf Wiersen and a supply
Racine	Arne Johnsen
Milwaukee and North Cape	Burrel Smith
Manitowoc and Sheboygan	To be supplied
Neenah and Oshkosh	Supplied by Martinus Hillerud
DePere and Fort Howard	To be supplied
Cambridge circuit	Otto J. Sanaker
Manistee and Frankfort	Henry Danielsen
LaCrosse and Lansing	Axel Gustafson

<sup>17</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 31.

<sup>18</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 33 and 36. There is no indication in the minutes that the question of district reorganization was discussed on the conference floor. Haagenen (*Historie*, p. 98) says that the cabinet decided in favor of two districts.

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Coon Prairie and Richland .....	Ole Jacobsen
Whitewater and Oconomowoc .....	Oliver L. Hansen
Editor of <i>Den Christelige Talsmand</i> .....	Andrew Haagenzen

### ST. PAUL DISTRICT

Peter Jensen, *Presiding Elder*

Washington Prairie and Big Canoe .....	Lewis A. Larsen
Round Prairie and Wilmington .....	Amund Olsen
Newburg and South Fork .....	Asle Knudsen
Grand Meadow and Adams .....	O. T. Olsen
Forest City .....	A. Petersen
Sioux City .....	John Jacobsen
Daneville and Saybrook .....	Marius J. Pihl
St. Paul and Faribault .....	Bengt C. Olin
Minneapolis and Waseca .....	Martinus Nelson
Red Wing and Belvidere .....	Christian Omann
Plainview circuit .....	J. Petersen
New Centerville circuit .....	P. B. Smith
Deer Park circuit .....	Christopher Christophersen
Atwater circuit .....	Bernt Johannesen
Scandia Grove circuit .....	Nels A. Qvale
Montevideo circuit .....	To be supplied

As Haagenzen states (page 99), "There were many changes in appointments, but it is the lot of the Methodist preacher to be reminded constantly that life is a journey and that no abiding place can be found here on earth for him." As one of the leaders in the new conference, Haagenzen believed that the Racine meeting of 1880 had proceeded with glorious harmony and that the pastors departed from their first annual conference session with new courage and hope for the work ahead. Still laboring under pioneer conditions, with its institutions in an embryonic stage and with its constituency moving restlessly in search of new locations and better opportunities, the organization composed of Norwegian and Danish immigrants commenced its mission of 63 years under strong clerical leadership and, no less essential, a sufficient number of devoted layfolk to give promise of future victories in the realm of the spirit.

## *The Conference Grows*

CHERISHING GREAT EXPECTATIONS for the coming years, pastors and their wives gathered in Chicago in 1881 for the second annual session of the Northwest Norwegian Conference. In the solemnity and joy combined in those September days in First Church men talked about the attempt made upon President James A. Garfield's life on July 2, and a turn for the worse in his condition. A session of prayer was devoted to the president's recovery. Garfield succumbed on September 19, a few days after adjournment of the conference. His passing was genuinely regretted not only because of the long and sympathy-provoking struggle of a fellow man for life but also because most of those assembled as Christian leaders in Chicago had cast their ballots for the Republican standard bearer, as was their custom.<sup>1</sup>

In the 1880's Methodism made substantial gains among Norwegian and Danish immigrants and their children in midwestern America. The number of congregations increased from 43 in 1880 to 70 in 1890. Membership nearly doubled, rising from 2,266 to 3,902. The number of parsonages rose from 16 to 30, and the number of preachers from 24 to 48. In general, the conference was almost twice as strong in 1890 as it had been a decade earlier. In 1881, at the threshold of the period, O. P. Petersen, superintendent of the Chicago District, complained that the work was proceeding too slowly and offered as his explanation that he and his colleagues "labored among a people trained to think in terms of a state church." He cited the great need of missionary endeavors among the Scandinavians coming to the United States every year and concluded with a plea for "more men and means to cope with the westward migration." Peter Jensen reported that he had visited many places in Minnesota, Iowa, and Dakota outside his St. Paul District. During the year he had traveled, he said, over 14,000 miles and delivered 188 sermons. "In the West," said he, "men

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1881)*, 20. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 21, 1881.

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of strong hearts as well as sound bodies are needed." Yet with the call of the West the opportunity for advancing the work in the old world was not neglected. In 1881 Bishop Cyrus D. Foss appointed four men as missionaries to Denmark, three of them re-appointments, including Carl Frederick Eltzholtz.<sup>2</sup>

Financial stringency failed to prevent new classes and congregations from taking form on the Chicago District in the 1880's. Classes in Wausau, Wisconsin, and Muskegon, Michigan, were paralleled by congregations in Sandwich, Illinois, and in the Moreland (later Austin) section and on Noble Street in Chicago. Few of the societies were able to pay the preacher's salary in full, meager as it was. O. P. Petersen stated that while the newer immigrants swelled the membership rolls they could not sustain the church financially. In general, preaching points were missionary in character, maintained largely by board of missions appropriations. At the time of Petersen's report only First Church in Chicago, Trinity in Racine, the Cambridge circuit in Wisconsin, and the Leland circuit in Illinois were self-supporting. When it is considered that ministerial salaries ranged from \$300 to \$500 a year, most congregations were indeed raising little money. Besides, the man appointed to the charge paid his own traveling expenses and house rent, leaving a meager balance to provide for his family.<sup>3</sup>

New church buildings nevertheless testified to the vitality of layfolk and pastors. On the Chicago District Chicago Second Church (Immanuel Church after 1886) moved away from Division Street to Maplewood Avenue and, in 1882, erected a structure upon three lots donated by the Clark Street American congregation. The work in Parkside (later Bethel) began in 1883 with home meetings under the leadership of Nels E. Simonsen, a student in Evanston who was about to go abroad to study at the University of Christiania. A sanctuary was completed there as well

<sup>2</sup> *Yearbook and Journal of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, p. 49. Statistics quoted in this work are usually taken from the table here cited and are reproduced at the close of this volume. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1881), 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1882), 31 and (1884), 12. Haagen-sen (p. 108) remarks that in 1885 only five of 26 congregations on the Chicago District were self-supporting.



as in Moreland in 1886. The Noble Street Church was bought from another denomination. Sandwich, Illinois, also bought a church and moved it into the community. In Wisconsin new churches were dedicated in LaCrosse, North LaCrosse, Waupaca, Lewiston, Merrill, Eau Claire, Marinette, and Racine Junction. Camp meetings were held with American Methodists during the summers at DesPlaines, a suburb of Chicago. Compelled to relinquish the presiding eldership because his six-year term was up, Andrew Haagenzen reported for the Chicago District in 1890: "In the past 36 years I have participated wholeheartedly in the great struggle for our beloved Methodism. I have seen this great work expand and its strength increase in a glorious way. From a small class of eight members, organized in Cambridge, Wisconsin, in 1851, a class of 13 organized in Sarpsborg, Norway, in 1856, and a class organized in Denmark in 1859, the work has progressed in a wonderful way." The Cambridge congregation, as has been noted, went beyond the class stage to complete organization with 52 members in April, 1851. Marvelous progress had been made since Haagenzen's arrival from Sarpsborg in 1857, when there were but five preachers and 250 members. Of late, in 1888 and 1889, he had been able to report membership increases of 200 and 250 for the Chicago District alone. The decade of the 1880's was marked by heavy immigration from Norway, and Haagenzen and his alert colleagues were not wanting in missionary zeal.<sup>4</sup>

Within the bounds of the Chicago District, but belonging to the entire conference, developed a permanent theological seminary. While the conception dates from the 1860's, and a beginning had been made by 1870, activity declined thereafter. The idea was revived when Norwegian-Danish pastors of Wisconsin and Minnesota resolved in 1879 in a meeting at Red Wing, Minnesota, that the school directors, still officially recognized, should decide upon a site for an institution and seek a qualified teacher.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 31, 1881. Haagenzen, 124. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1888), 19; (1889), 14; (1890), 15.

<sup>5</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 3, 1879; from the report of L. A. Larsen, secretary of the joint meeting held from May 14 to 17. For the earlier seminary efforts see chapter three.

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The question of location had first to be settled. The lakeshore city of Evanston, saloonless in honor of Frances Willard, enjoyed first preference with some. John H. Johnson pointed out its many advantages in 1881. With working people in mind, Johnson cited reasonable transportation expense to and from Chicago via the Chicago and Northwestern Railway: 100 rides for \$14.20 on comfortable cars. Young women taking employment in private homes, with wholesome atmosphere, would earn from three to five dollars a week, meals and lodging included. Then there was Northwestern University, with a faculty of ten men, and Garrett Biblical Institute, whose professors offered their valuable services to the Norwegian-Danish seminarians in years to come. As one who had tasted of higher education himself, Johnson concluded by encouraging competent young people to write for further information to the proper school officials, whose names were given.<sup>6</sup>

Evanston's advantages did not go totally unchallenged. Letters of invitation from both Northwestern University and Hamline University were read to the assembled pastors in St. Paul in 1882. The committee on education reported in favor of Hamline, located in St. Paul. Dedication of the new Swedish Methodist seminary in Evanston the following year stimulated the Scandinavian cousins to the extent that the Northwest Norwegian Conference of 1883 determined to raise \$10,000 toward erection of a building, a monument to the centennial of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, independent of its Wesleyan counterpart in England. A bit impatient over delay, editor Haagensen hoped that the Norwegian-Danish folk would not be content with mere resolutions.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, sentiment on the matter of location was crystallizing. The result was a conference decision in 1884 in favor of Evanston. Those opposed to the decision emphasized the point that, since publication activities were centered in Chicago, the new educational enterprise should be located in St. Paul or Forest City.

The conference of 1884 proceeded a step further by requesting the presiding bishop, Randolph S. Foster, to initiate action leading

<sup>6</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, April 5, 1881.

<sup>7</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, October 24, 1883. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1882), 20; (1883), 39.

to the transfer from the Norway Conference of Nels E. Simonsen, a graduate of Northwestern University (B.A., 1880) and of Garrett Biblical Institute (B.D., 1882). Simonsen would head the seminary. It seemed that all was accomplished when Bishop Thomas Bowman reported to the assembled brethren in 1885 that Simonsen's transfer was assured. But there had been confusion, and more delay, prompting Haagensen to announce in the *Talsmand* that Simonsen had been appointed in the meantime by Bishop John F. Hurst to the Christiania Trinity pulpit and to the superintendency of a new seminary in Norway. Hurst undoubtedly heeded the request from America shortly, for Haagensen received a telegram from Simonsen stating that he was accepting the Evanston post. In correspondence from Paris with the new editor, Christian Treider, the long-awaited Simonsen explained that Foster had been unintentionally delinquent in forwarding to Hurst the necessary information.<sup>8</sup>

While serving the Evanston charge, Simonsen began seminary classes on January 18, 1886, in a classroom of the church. In his report for the Chicago District that year Haagensen inferred that it would be advantageous if Simonsen could devote full time to the seminary work. Twelve months later the trustees of the educational society were pleased to announce that ground had been broken (August 27, 1887) on a lot leased from the trustees of Northwestern University for a period of 99 years at a nominal rental of one dollar a year. The lot on Sherman Avenue and Park Street was more than ample, 100 feet deep and 150 feet wide. During the year 1886-87 there were 16 students, who paid from \$25.00 to \$30.00 monthly for rooms in the neighborhood and \$12.00 a year for tuition. Completion of the building in 1888 solved the room problem. The total indebtedness of \$12,000 was erased by 1901.<sup>9</sup> What the professor's salary actually was is not certain, but a conference committee of 1888 recommended \$1,000 with a free

<sup>8</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 9 and December 2, 1885. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1884), 8; (1885), 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1886), 17; (1887), 24; (1888), 29. Hans P. Bergh, *Femtiarskrift udgivet i anledning af den Norsk-danske Methodismes Femtiarsjubilæum* (Chicago, 1901), 59-60. T. Otmann Firing in the historical section of the *Journal and Yearbook of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 64.

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room in the school building. So began a long and distinguished career for Nels E. Simonsen, who retired in 1920.

Farther west the Methodist work among Norwegians and Danes made rapid strides. New classes sprang up in the St. Paul District: Omaha, Nebraska, in 1882; Crookston, Duluth, and Beltrami in Minnesota in 1883; Devils Lake in North Dakota in 1883; and Carbon, Iowa, in 1889. Peter Jensen, speaking as head of the district, called attention in 1881 to the remarkable influx of Norwegians to the Red River and Goose River valleys in Dakota, where in the same year he had organized a congregation of 20 members, "true Christian folk, close by Goose River, Traill County." Prior to Jensen's tour Martinus Nelson visited points along the way to Mayville, now in eastern North Dakota.<sup>10</sup> Nelson traveled from Minneapolis to Fargo via Brainerd on the Northern Pacific, preached in the American Methodist church in Moorhead, observed the busy land office in Fargo, and called at some of the public schools, which impressed him agreeably. The St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad, forerunner of the Great Northern, had been completed from Fargo to Grand Forks, he said. At Mayville he preached ten times in one week. Nelson knew that a pastor was needed at Goose River and made mention of one man's promise to donate two good lots in "Hill City" if the Norwegians would build a Methodist church. The church had to wait until 1883 but, as indicated, Jensen organized the Hillsboro congregation, probably the first of its kind in what was to be North Dakota.

Dakota subscribers frequently informed editor Haagensen of conditions on the frontier. Christian Johnson of Mount View, in the far northeastern part of the territory, hoped to attract more settlers. He explained that excellent homesteading opportunities awaited in a land where black topsoil lay from two to four feet deep. Since his arrival two years ago, in 1879, wheat had been profitably grown where formerly wild grass dominated the landscape. The post office, once 30 miles distant, was now only 40 steps away. P. Bervig of Hillsboro also encouraged the ambitious to ac-

<sup>10</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1881), 35. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 11, 1881.



cept of Uncle Sam's bounty. Water could be found, he said, by digging wells only 12 to 75 feet deep. He admitted that there was better drinking water farther west. The country was flat, he went on, and wagons required no brakes ("Her behøves ingen Brakes paa Vognen"). He had heard that in Traill County there were eight Scandinavians for every Yankee.<sup>11</sup>

Back of the westward movement lay the active promotion efforts of the railroad companies. The St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba, the Chicago and Northwestern, and the Northern Pacific advertised special rates to the Northwest in the *Talsmand*. Under the attractive title of "a land excursion to the Red River Valley" the Chicago and Milwaukee road glamorized the opportunity of seeing the "golden Harvest." With the guidance of a travel agent for the company, round trip excursion tickets to Crookston might be used. The Northern Pacific announced, over the names of the Scandinavian travel agent and the general land agent, "lowest prices and longterm credit" on land. Reduced travel rates for land seekers, reduced freight rates to farmers, and an unusual chance to select good railroad and government land directly along the railroad were further inducements to buy "the best wheat and pasture land in the country." The iron horse facilitated both settlement and church organization. In turn, settlement made railroading profitable. Peter Jensen could say for the St. Paul District in 1882 that he had organized a congregation of 39 members for the combined communities of Fargo in Dakota, and Glyndon and Lake Park in Minnesota, all lying "near each other along the Northern Pacific Railway." He also was pleased to report the beginning of a congregation in Argo, Dakota, and the completion of a church building in Sioux City, Iowa. One item in his report was rather revealing. The Grand Meadow and Round Prairie circuits in Minnesota could no longer support their ministers. Too many of their members had gone farther west. Here was the answer to Round Prairie's relatively sudden rise and fall.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 17, 1881 and May 3, 1882.

<sup>12</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 17 and December 14, 1881. *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1882), 33.

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Behind the reports of Jensen for the St. Paul District lay the work of a man who can hardly remain anonymous. Christian Omann, of Danish birth, emigrated as a young man to America. Having been spiritually awakened at Chicago First Church in 1874, he joined the Wisconsin Conference and became a member of the Norwegian-Danish Conference at its beginning. At the height of his activity in Dakota Territory (later North Dakota) Omann corresponded faithfully with Treider and Haagensen, editors of the *Talsmand*.

Omann's letters provide information not otherwise obtainable on religious and social conditions in his area. One communication he addressed to "our friends who wish to come to Traill County." Therein Omann acknowledged the many letters he had received inquiring about the prospects. He offered no categorical answer. If his friends were comfortably situated where they were, perhaps they should not set out for Dakota. Those skilled in a trade, or even the unskilled, would find plenty of opportunity working for the railroad or in building towns and cities. However, they should take their cattle and sheep along, since food costs were high. But Omann did not wish to make settlement promotion his main business. After all, he was a minister of the Gospel and believed that "the question of migrating to Dakota should be taken to God in prayer."<sup>13</sup>

The progress of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the Middle West and in Utah moved Omann to present the needs of "the mission to the Northwest." "The harvest is great!" he wrote. "They speak of a field of labor in other places, but think of all the Norwegians living in the Northwest! It is good to hear that workers are being sent to Utah. We do not have many wives, but in a sense we have a Utah here." Omann found it useful to employ the *Talsmand* for communicating with folk who had been members back east and had moved to Dakota. Many had written him appealing for help in providing church services. Himself preoccupied with twelve preaching points, the best that he could offer was: "Write to the presiding elder, P. Jensen, Forest City, Iowa. He would like

<sup>13</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, January 18, 1882.

to hear from you, how many members you have, how large the settlement is, and what prospects there are for the work of the church. Perhaps he can visit you on his travels, or send a preacher, if he can learn about the conditions and how one can reach your settlement. I must inform all who are involved that I cannot get around to answering all your letters.”<sup>14</sup>

Sometimes the experience of “dissenting” pioneer preachers, though deadly serious at the time, might be amusing to posterity. A Hillsboro correspondent of 1883 tells of a meeting held one Sunday afternoon in which Omann came into difficulties with the local Lutheran pastor. The pastor denied Omann the privilege of speaking, claiming that the congregation had called him to do some business there that afternoon. But Omann would not be denied. He replied that two heads were better than one. Then arose one Markus Nelson, father of a Methodist preacher in Utah, and explained that the people had assembled to hear Omann. He charged the Lutheran pastor with creating confusion. Just as Omann went to his knees in prayer to open the service, one man arose and walked out mumbling something about a wolf in sheep’s clothing. But Omann proceeded to speak on “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” Thereafter Omann invited his Lutheran counterpart to speak if he wished, whereupon the latter read several scripture passages, not omitting the one on guarding against false prophets.<sup>15</sup>

Omann’s influence extended westward into Dakota. At times he fared better with the Lutherans than the above incident would suggest. An anonymous settler of Griggs County speaks in 1884 of the growth of Cooperstown, the county seat, and of Methodist activity in that region. Omann, said he, was the only Methodist preacher seen in Cooperstown, having first spoken there two years earlier in a “big hotel,” first in English and then in Norwegian. Following the benediction the people sat down outside and discussed Methodism. The correspondent explains that Omann was later permitted the use of the Lutheran church in Cooperstown.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 7 and May 23, 1883.

<sup>15</sup> H. Offingsbø in *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 27, 1883.

<sup>16</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 27, 1884.

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Anticipating an appointment elsewhere in 1884, Omann summarized his three-year experience in Hillsboro in a final letter. The Methodists had a church, a parsonage, and a cemetery, as well as 15 schoolhouses in that vicinity for holding meetings. Active membership had mounted from 12 to 79. Had Omann wished to be boastful, he might have added that the Hillsboro folk in 1884 subscribed nearly \$2,000 to the theological school fund, thanks to the urgings of Haagensen, who participated in their camp meetings.<sup>17</sup>

Omann's days were numbered. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 42 in Waupaca, Wisconsin, in 1894. It had been his custom to keep records of his missionary services. He delivered some 2,500 sermons, received 320 members on trial and 189 in full connection, and made about 5,000 house calls.<sup>18</sup>

Not less exciting than Omann's letters is the diary of Christopher Christophersen, another Dakota (South Dakota) pioneer.<sup>19</sup> His story reads like a personal history of the 1880's. Appointed to Argo, Danville (formerly Daneville), and Saybrook in 1882, he decided to spare his family the hardships of a parish without a parsonage and made the journey alone from Deer Park, Wisconsin. Two ponies guaranteed a progress of 40 to 60 miles daily. From Argo to Brookings, a distance of 22 miles, he rode with the mail carrier. Outside of Brookings he was to conduct a service of worship in a home, which he reached only after fording, nearly drowning in, a rain-swollen river. Appropriately his sermon topic in that home was, "When thou passest through the fire it shall not burn thee, and through the water, it shall not engulf thee."

Later appointments of Christophersen did little to relieve his rigors. In 1883 Canby and Montevideo in Minnesota were added to his Dakota charges. The distance from Saybrook to Argo alone was 165 miles, and direct railroad connections could not be made. A telegram summoned him back to Deer Park to the deathbed of his four-year-old daughter. After serving other charges in Minne-

<sup>17</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, July 16 and September 17, 1884.

<sup>18</sup> John Lorentz in *Evangelisk Tidende*, March 28, 1910. The city of Waupaca named one of its streets after Omann.

<sup>19</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 2, 1915.



sota and Wisconsin he took the supernumerary relationship in 1891. His careful record of 18 years states that he preached 3,955 sermons (an average of over 200 annually), conducted 906 prayer meetings, and made 1,616 house calls, besides instructing children, receiving new members, and officiating at baptisms, weddings, and funerals. As he had once conquered the rampaging river, so financially he managed to keep his head above water, with a total income of \$7,267 and expenses of \$6,186. He had traveled 60,235 miles.

Extension of the geographical area of service demanded reorganization. At the annual conference session of 1884 Bishop Randolph S. Foster recommended a division of the St. Paul District, the newer northwestern part to be called the Red River Valley District. Peter Jensen was appointed to head the new district. But the "valley" was broad, stretching from Upper Michigan across northern Wisconsin and Minnesota into northern Dakota, a traveling distance of nearly a thousand miles before new railroad lines shortened it.<sup>20</sup>

Frederick Ring, a Christiania (now Oslo) convert who came to America in 1882, comments upon his first appointment "among the newcomers and Indians." When he arrived in Crookston and Beltrami, Minnesota, there were no congregations and no stipulated salary. Part of the "mission money" disappeared in traveling. For the first winter he and his wife rented an abandoned saloon for living quarters. One-room shanties and sod houses often sufficed for religious services. In one corner there might be some chickens or a pig, yet no distractions could prevent the faithful from singing "Hvor deilig det er at mødes" (How lovely it is to meet). Indians sometimes begged at Ring's door in Norwegian for butter, bread, tobacco, and whiskey, tell-tale evidence that the latter items were not entirely unknown in Norwegian settlers' homes. During his four years in the Red River valley Ring organized the Crookston congregation and saw a church erected there. At the conference of 1885 Ring received the appointment to Grand Forks, where he

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1888), 20. Jensen stated that completion of a railroad from Watersmeet to Powers, Michigan, had shortened the distance to 675 miles.

also proceeded to organize the flock. A church was completed under Ring's successor, C. August Peterson, who had come from Norway in 1883. Frederick Ring returned to Chicago where, through remarkable diligence in raising funds for needy families and in personal evangelism, his name became known in wider circles. Always an enthusiastic Norwegian, he made many friendships among the Norwegian colony of the big city. When John Anderson, longtime publisher of *Skandinaven*, died, in 1910, his sons requested Ring to conduct the funeral services. This he did in the Norwegian language, while another pastor spoke in English.<sup>21</sup>

During the middle 1880's further progress was made in northern Dakota, in which Devils Lake and Cooperstown shared. In 1885 A. M. Madsen was assigned to Devils Lake, a hundred miles west of Grand Forks. By the close of his first year the new minister informed *Talsmand* readers of a property "soon worth \$900." Jensen as presiding elder announced in the conference session of 1886 that the Devils Lake congregation secured their real estate from the St. Paul, Minneapolis, and Manitoba Railroad. A parsonage had been built upon it, house and lot together costing less than \$700.<sup>22</sup>

Cooperstown, to the southeast of Devils Lake, at long last received a minister. At the conference session of 1884 Gustav Abrahamsen was appointed. He found his work challenging. When writing to editor Treider two months after his arrival, Abrahamsen remarked upon the many teams coming to the seat of Griggs County with loads of wheat, then selling at 48¢ to 50¢ a bushel. The wheat farmers, he observed, often went "into Backus to restore their depressed spirits." He deplored their prodigality. One farmer asked him whether he was a "Melodist." Abrahamsen stayed but a year. He was succeeded by C. L. Westberg, who promptly began to collect funds for the erection of a church, completed in 1886. Peter Jensen regretted to report, however, that Cooperstown folk lost their savings in a bank failure.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser* (Chicago, 1934), 33. Also his *Chicago, a Century Old Saga* (Chicago, 1936), 21. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, December 2, 1885.

<sup>22</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, December 23, 1885.

<sup>23</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, December 24, 1884 and December 16, 1885. *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1886), 20.

A more serious complaint came from Jensen in his report of 1887. A few congregations, he said, had lost members who chose to travel to Washington, Idaho, and California, "as far west as they could go without going out to sea." This regret was echoed by C. August Peterson when, in 1889, he saw the Grand Forks society weakened by family migrations to the Pacific Coast. With the highest of motives Peterson himself would one day join his migratory friends and become a bulwark of strength in the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference. The thoughtfulness of the departing Grand Forks members in paying their annual pledges before leaving took some of the sting out of their exit.<sup>24</sup>

Peter Jensen delivered his last report as head of the Red River Valley District in 1888. The conference of that year decided to rename the district. It became temporarily the Minneapolis District, with John H. Johnson, returned from Norway, as presiding elder. The former name was restored in 1890, when four districts were established: the Chicago, the Omaha, the Red River Valley, and lastly the St. Paul and Minneapolis. "In eight years of my travels," said Jensen, "I have preached from four to five times a week and traveled 17,000 miles a year and have never arrived too late for the train but once, when the train schedule had been changed."<sup>25</sup>

In the first decade of expansion the St. Paul District continued to share in the creation of additional congregations and sanctuaries. Houses of worship arose in Des Moines, Iowa; Scandia Grove, Minnesota; Missouri Valley, Iowa; and in Minneapolis and Omaha. New congregations came into being in 1890 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, and in Fremont, Nebraska. Not least important was the Minneapolis accomplishment, costing nearly \$12,000. The steepled brick structure in south Minneapolis was proudly pronounced "surely the most beautiful Norwegian-Danish Methodist church in America" by Asle Knudsen, presiding elder of the district, in 1887. At the same time Knudsen cited the absence of regular services in many populous places in the five states covered by the dis-

<sup>24</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1887), 20. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, April 2, 1889.

<sup>25</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1888), 20-22.

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tract. He hoped that more financial support would be forthcoming from the missionary society.<sup>26</sup>

One might wonder whether the ministers of the 1880's gave all their attention to organizing congregations and erecting places of worship. The expansion of Norwegian-Danish Methodism did reveal itself in less material ways as well, in pastoral discussions in the field of theology, on the subject of church administration, and in the area of practical Christianity. At the conference of 1881 the following resolutions with reference to secret societies were read and adopted: <sup>27</sup>

Since we from reliable sources are convinced that secret societies are not in harmony with the Church of God and our free institutions, but are in their nature and operation a stumbling block and hindrance to the Church and a laming of the arm of the law, therefore resolved,

1. that we will not receive anyone into our conference who will not separate himself from secret societies, and
2. that we also call upon everyone who desires to join our church to first withdraw from secret societies.

(signed) A. Johnsen

In 1882 a much-debated question in Methodist circles was the propriety of permitting women to speak from the pulpit, or to hold high office in the church. St. Paul District preachers went on record as being "absolutely against her public appearance as a preacher in the congregation." The General Conference of 1880 had already decided against authorizing women to preach. But, lest it be thought that the women of the parsonage were unappreciated, one pastor expounded upon this practical theme: "Is it not time that our parsonages should be provided with the necessary furniture?" But some comfort was found in Jesus' promise of many mansions.<sup>28</sup>

At a Chicago District preachers' meeting in 1885 Haagensen read a paper entitled, "Is the Holy Spirit a personal and intelligent being, or is it simply a divine power that works upon man?" Ole Jacobsen on that occasion discussed whether any man was authorized of God to forgive sins, as taught by Roman Catholic doctrine.

<sup>26</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1887), 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Minutes*, Northwest Norwegian Conference (1881), 29.

<sup>28</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 21, 1882, and July 9, 1884.



Severin E. Simonsen considered whether hell was a place of eternal or of temporary punishment. O. P. Petersen inquired in his paper, "Which kinds of divorce are permissible according to the Word of God?" And Burrell Smith discussed the origin of faith, whether it is a gift of God.<sup>29</sup>

Like their brethren to the east, the Red River Valley District preachers met regularly for mutual inspiration and discussion. In Crookston, Minnesota, in 1885 Marius J. Pihl elaborated upon the possibility of children remaining in fellowship with God from birth and thus not standing in need of conversion. Christian Omann debated whether children should be baptized by Methodist pastors, irrespective of the church relationship of the parents. Making camp meetings of maximum value was the topic of Martinus Hillerud. More disturbing to many minds was the impact of geological science upon a literal interpretation of the Bible, particularly of the creation story, as found in Genesis. O. P. Petersen in 1890 stated that the study of geology was too recent and untried to challenge biblical teachings. It should be more modest in its claims, he believed.<sup>30</sup>

Pastors and layfolk also gave expression to their views on questions of political and social concern. In 1882 Haagensen urged Norwegian support of Knute Nelson, later United States Senator from Minnesota, in his bid for Congress. To what extent Haagensen was moved by personal recollections from his Cambridge pastorate in the late 1860's is not possible to determine but, from the future senator's side, there was warm remembrance of Haagensen's ministry in that pioneer Wisconsin parish. In the opinion of one of his biographers, Nelson had turned against the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America because of its failure to take an unequivocal stand against slavery as an institution. In later years, as in 1882, Knute Nelson had reason to believe that Haagensen supported him politically.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 24, 1885.

<sup>30</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, July 15, 1885, and September 16, 1890.

<sup>31</sup> Martin W. Odland, *The Life of Knute Nelson* (Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1926), 50. In a letter to Frederick Ring, dated July 7, 1919, the senator wrote, "I remember the Rev. Mr. Haagensen to whom you refer. He was for many years the minister of

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In the presidential race of 1884 Treider declared, laconically, "None of the four candidates is as black as he has been painted in the campaign papers." Although he favored temperance, he advised readers to vote Republican, for James G. Blaine, rather than Prohibitionist, for John P. St. John. His argument was that a vote for St. John would indirectly help Grover Cleveland and the "whiskey party" to victory. In the annual conference session of 1885 it was decided to conduct a temperance meeting one evening instead of the scheduled preaching service. Sentiment against the use of tobacco was equally strong among the Norwegian-Danish clergy. Indeed, laymen shared the sentiment, as expressed by resolution of a laymen's conference in 1887 to the General Conference, including themselves as well as pastors in its application.

In 1890 both Treider and Haagensen went on record in favor of strengthening the public schools, partly through the teaching of basic subjects in English. With reference to Wisconsin's so-called Bennett law, Treider commented, "No people on earth would tolerate in their midst immigrants who reared their children exclusively in the language and traditions of their fatherland." What Treider stated in the spring of the year was echoed in Haagensen's two-column *Talsmand* article in the fall. Their pronouncements were rather advanced for leaders of an immigrant population, even though public instruction, not religious, was at stake.<sup>32</sup>

The relationship of Norwegian-Danish Methodism to the Methodist Episcopal Church as a whole was one of loyalty, yet slightly strained by the handicap of language and perhaps of neglect. While in the editorial chair in 1882, Haagensen complained that the Methodist Episcopal Church offered no financial aid when *Missionæren*, *Den Christelige Talsmand*, and *Hyrdestemmen*, a paper for Sunday school children, were begun. The church had since given token aid to the *Talsmand*. Haagensen complimented the Mission-

the Methodist Church at Cambridge, Wisconsin. I frequently heard him preach. I attended the Sunday school of his church for one or two summers, and a part of the time I was in charge of one of the classes." See Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser*, 83.

<sup>32</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, October 18, 1882; May 27 and October 28, 1890. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1885), 11 and (1887), 31.

ary Society, with offices in New York, upon its sponsorship of missionaries to isolated Norwegian and Danish communities in Oregon, California, and Utah. His loyalty to the parent church never wavered. Speaking as presiding elder of the Chicago District in 1887, he could truthfully declare, "We love Methodism for its teachings, its discipline, and especially for its forthright and practical way of trying to win souls; also for its testimony in the world."

Occasionally a leading American churchman sought to transcend the linguistic barrier, as when Bishop John F. Hurst, who once presided over the Norway Conference, opened the annual session of 1888 by reading Psalm 71 from the Norwegian hymnal and following with John 14 from the Norwegian Bible. For his thoughtful consideration the conference, by resolution, congratulated him upon his ability to read and understand their native tongue. The resolution further stated that in that respect he was a pioneer among the bishops. To a limited extent the Sunday schools and young people's societies were beginning to use English, but there was little demand for English preaching.<sup>33</sup>

The decade that began in 1881 with great expectations closed in triumph. Annual reports from the districts had shown consistent gains in membership and gratifying expansion into immigrant communities. However, three problems called for solution. First, there were not enough pastors ready to heed the Macedonian call. Forty-eight ordained men managed to meet the demands of 70 congregations in 1890, but without more ministerial help the work could not be extended into other promising fields. Second, too many of the congregations depended upon American funds both for church construction and for current expenses. Finally, the departure of many for the golden West weakened many congregations. A number of those who yielded to the Viking urge for adventure and exploration were permanently lost to Norwegian-Danish Methodism. Credit should be given the churches "back

<sup>33</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, November 22, 1882. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1887), 19 and (1888), 4 and 34. Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser*, 36-37. With reference to the use of English, Ring was referring to his own parish, that of Chicago First Church, around the year 1890. The largest in the conference, it numbered 400 members.

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east" for their earnest efforts to maintain contact with former members and other unchurched Norwegians and Danes through the Utah mission and for their encouragement in the eventual establishment of a conference on the Pacific Coast.



## Utah Offers Hard Ground

ONE OF THE STRANGEST EPISODES in American religious development concerns the Mormon migration to Utah. Under the leadership of Brigham Young, successor to the founder, Joseph Smith, the Latter Day Saints proceeded in 1847 to the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Earlier Smith had been killed by an enraged citizenry in Illinois. Stimulated by a desire for statehood, as well as by genuine missionary motives, the Mormons engaged in strenuous efforts to win proselytes in Europe and America. It is at this point that they became important as a factor in, and a deterrent to, American Methodism. Similarly, they played an important role in Norwegian and Danish immigrant affairs, for many of their converts were won, at the expense of Scandinavian Lutheranism, through the Christiania (now Oslo) and Copenhagen missions.

Mormon efforts after 1850 in the Scandinavian lands proved fruitful. In the second half of the nineteenth century they won over 45,000 converts there, of whom some 30,000 emigrated in large parties under Mormon guidance to Utah. Of the total emigration 57% were Danish, 32% were Swedish, 10% Norwegian, and a few Icelandic. Shepherded migration ceased in the 1890's, when social and economic conditions in the Scandinavian countries improved.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1879 editor Christian Treider of *Den Christelige Talsmand* took cognizance of the Mormon influence among Scandinavian immigrants. He deplored the defection of so many Danes and Norwegians and wished that they could have been an asset, as he put it, rather than a disgrace to their newly adopted country. He joined with the American press in its "Mormon scandal" allegations and regretted the attitude of *Den Danske Pioneer* of Omaha for condoning polygamy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See William Mulder, "Mormons from Scandinavia, 1850-1900: a shepherded migration," *Pacific Historical Review*, August, 1954, pages 227-246. Mulder derives his information from *Skandinaviens Stjerne* (The Star of Scandinavia), a Mormon journal published in Copenhagen, beginning in 1851.

<sup>2</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 19, 1879, and September 16, 1879.

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The Methodist Episcopal Church began missionary work among the Mormons of Utah in 1870. Not until 1882, however, was preparation made for work among the Scandinavians there, when Bishop John F. Hurst authorized one Peter A. H. Franklin to make arrangements. Franklin, a native of Norway, had once been a Mormon. With the arrival of Martinus Nelson in the summer of 1883 the Utah mission got under way. The son of Marcus Nelsen, a Methodist minister who had served both in Norway and Denmark, Nelson had joined the Wisconsin Conference in 1876. In 1880 he joined the newly organized Northwest Norwegian Conference. He was to serve in Utah for twelve years. Bishop Isaac D. Wiley requested him to exchange his Chicago pulpit (Second Church, later known as Maplewood Avenue Church) for the opportunity then beckoning in the land of the honeybee. On July 29, 1883, Nelson organized a congregation of eighteen members under the name "First Norwegian Methodist Church of Salt Lake City."<sup>3</sup>

In a letter to Andrew Haagenzen of the *Talsmand* Martinus Nelson explained that one charter member had been a Mormon for 33 years and a Mormon preacher for 20 years. Already a church lot had been bought at a price of \$475. The church extension society promised to give \$500 if the congregation would build a church costing at least \$1,500, free of debt. Nelson went on to explain that a satisfactory church could not be built for \$1,500, since labor and materials were twice as expensive as in Chicago. He appealed for contributions. Meanwhile, the faithful few continued to meet in the Methodist sanctuary on Sunday afternoons. The year came to an end with a brick structure completed, the total cost of building and lot together being \$2,200. It was to be known as the Iliff Church, named after T. C. Iliff, the American superintendent.<sup>4</sup>

Martinus Nelson relates the first experiences of Norwegian Methodists in Brigham City in 1883. Located in northern Utah, the city had about 1,800 people, half of them Scandinavians. Amer-

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Haagenzen, *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider af Havet*, 161-162. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 29, 1883. *Sixty-fifth Annual Report of the Missionary Society* (1883), 238, 240-241.

<sup>4</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, November 14, 1883.

ican Presbyterians had done some work there and in several neighboring Scandinavian settlements, but "they naturally could not reach the Scandinavian folk, although they are more willing to accept the Gospel than the English-speaking folk." Nelson's visit was in response to an invitation by the Presbyterian minister, in whose church he proceeded to conduct a Sunday evening service of worship. He was surprised to find several *Talsmand* subscribers and even more impressed with the discovery of a Norwegian Bible and a dozen of Haagen's translation of "Sankey's and Bliss's Songs." The helpful Presbyterian pastor had ordered the books and had attempted to conduct Norwegian services. He had played the organ while the congregation sang. He had prayed in English, then invited the congregation to read passages from the Norwegian Bible. Finally, he had preached briefly in English.<sup>5</sup>

Nelson went on to report that Bishop Wiley had authorized Peter Franklin to travel back east to collect money for the Utah mission. He stated that the mission needed at least \$5,000 now, a thousand of it to go to the church and school in Salt Lake City, another thousand for building a smaller church for serving the communities of Ephraim, Mount Pleasant, and Fountain Green, and a third thousand for Bear Lake in southern Idaho. The disposition of the remaining \$2,000 was not stated. He announced that Lisa M. Saugstad, recently appointed by the Women's Home Missionary Society to the mission, would work in Mount Pleasant during Franklin's absence.

The saints, themselves no strangers to religious persecution, showed little tolerance toward other religious work. Having returned from his fund-raising venture in the East, Peter Franklin revealed that many Mormons had informed him that they dare not listen to his sermons, for fear of disapproval by Mormon authorities. He alleged that Mormon control of every well and over other necessities impeded the progress of Christianity. "So many who otherwise might attend Presbyterian or Methodist services are afraid of losing their water and their wheat crop," said he.<sup>6</sup> Crops

<sup>5</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, November 14, 1883.

<sup>6</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 12, 1883.

depended more upon irrigation than upon rain, the water coming from the mountains.

Occasionally opposition to Norwegian-Danish Methodism came in more sensational form. Martin Andersen, a recent arrival, related how he was "baptized" by an unknown assailant. One Sunday evening after he had preached at Manti and was returning to his home in Ephraim, seven miles away, he was doused with a bucket of water as he rode over a creek. The offender found concealment in the darkness and in a snowstorm. Earlier in the day someone had shouted after him, "What dirty work you have to do!" Said Andersen, "It is often inferred that it is so quiet and peaceful here. It seems to me to be the opposite." <sup>7</sup>

In 1884 Martinus Nelson took issue with A. W. Winberg, publisher of *Bikuben* (The Beehive) of Salt Lake City. Once having served as a guide for Scandinavian immigrant groups, Winberg had challenged Nelson's article on "Thoughts about a Mormon Conference," published in the *Talsmand*. Nelson countered by calling Mormon freedom a farce. It savored of clerical tyranny rather than brotherhood, he charged. "I have never found a people who fear each other more or are more distrustful of each other. Hundreds of Mormons here have not dared to write home to Scandinavia to tell their own relatives what the conditions really are." <sup>8</sup>

The Utah mission grew in numbers in the 1880's. In 1888 the General Conference provided for its organization into a district within the Colorado Conference. In the absence of public schools, the mission carried on educational work with success. Haagenzen regretted that instruction was given in the English language, thus contributing eventually to the growth of American rather than Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the territory. At the annual meeting of the mission in July, 1885, the presiding bishop made appointments to the Salt Lake congregation and to four circuits. He likewise appointed three unmarried women as teachers.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 28, 1884. Winberg was in charge of a party of 557 Scandinavians who left Hamburg in 1865. He became prominent in Mormon affairs in Utah. See William Mulder, *op. cit.*, 241-244.

<sup>8</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 25, 1884.

<sup>9</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 5, 1885.



Reporting on developments of the year 1886, Haagensen states, probably correctly, that Salt Lake City had only nineteen members. But the school there served 91 pupils, fifty of whom came from Mormon homes. Peter Franklin traveled in the East and raised \$7,000 by subscription for the erection of a church building in Salt Lake City. In the Brigham City circuit, where two-thirds of the population were Scandinavians, a hall was rented with funds provided by the American Methodist church extension society.<sup>10</sup>

From Logan, Utah, Martinus Nelson wrote Christian Treider of the *Talsmand* early in 1887 concerning his recent travels about the mission.<sup>11</sup> After Christmas he had attended the semi-annual meeting in Toole about 35 miles west of Salt Lake City. From there he journeyed southward to Spanish Fork, "a fairly large city of between 2,500 and 3,000 inhabitants, half of whom are Scandinavians, mostly Danish." Spanish Fork, a new mission opened in the previous summer, also had some Icelanders who had come to enjoy "the mysteries of Zion." The congregation was being served by one H. Johnsen, who had arrived as a Mormon from Norway and had forsaken his new-found faith. On New Year's Eve Nelson began a series of meetings in his own church in Salt Lake City, with assistance from Nielsen Staalberg of Brigham City. Twice the church was so crowded that children had to sit around the altar. Nelson reported that his weekday school had 26 pupils under the instruction of Bessie Helgesen, formerly of Big Canoe, Iowa. Upon his latest visit to Spanish Fork he found 90 children and young people in the Sunday school, a real achievement "especially in Utah, where young folk have no conception whatsoever of Christianity." He baptized nine children in Spanish Fork and was proud to add, "We were the first church to have a bell in Spanish Fork. One Swedish lady, who had arrived many years before and had never heard a church bell since departing from the old country, burst into tears when she first heard the bell." Concluded Nelson, "I believe that these church bells are a means of grace among our countrymen in Utah."

<sup>10</sup> Haagensen, 163.

<sup>11</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, probably about March 1; letter dated February 9, 1887.

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Despite constant growth, Methodist strength at the close of 1887 remained rather unimpressive. The entire mission could boast only 348 members, of whom only 78 belonged to the Scandinavian churches. Some 300 children attended the Scandinavian day schools. Small Scandinavian congregations existed in a number of places, including Salt Lake City, Spanish Fork, Brigham City, Santaquin, Mount Pleasant, Moroni, Richfield circuit, and Elsinore. Nevertheless, three years later, in 1890, the mission began publication of the *Utah Tidende* (Utah Times).<sup>12</sup>

One development of special interest merits attention. Apparently in 1889 the Latter Day Saints were prepared to renounce polygamy. "Be so kind," wrote Peter Franklin to the *Talsmand*, "as to let *Talsmanden* take along on its journey the good news that the bogeyman (*Busemanden*) in Utah is dead. Burial is expected to take place in the near future from Salt Lake City Tabernacle. No funeral march will be played, but the population of the entire territory will likely agree upon the singing of a hymn unknown for a long time here, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty." In the meantime it is already decided that the closing hymn will be "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run." Franklin soon proved himself to be less stable than the Mormon constituency that he was satirizing. While Mormons generally turned deaf ears to the tempting calls of the silver mines of Idaho and Colorado, Franklin by 1890 had become involved in mining speculation and had withdrawn from the active ministry.<sup>13</sup>

The first Scandinavian Methodist camp meetings in Utah were held in June, 1889, at Richfield. In the opinion of one participant, Christian Jørgen Heckner, pastor at Mount Pleasant and later editor of *Vidnesbyrdet* (The Testimony), Norwegian-Danish organ on the Pacific Coast, "The tent was packed and hundreds stood outside. Only six years ago our first preacher at that place could not hold meetings in the evening because it was impossible to pre-

<sup>12</sup> Haagensen, 163-165. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 19, 1890.

<sup>13</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 26, 1889. Haagensen, 166.

serve order. Now even the leading Mormons extend their hands in token of respect.”<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the peak of Norwegian-Danish accomplishment in Utah came in 1889. In the previous year the mission had been reorganized, as mentioned, into the Norwegian-Danish District of the English-speaking Colorado Conference. Martinus Nelson served as presiding elder. Appointments for the year 1889-90 affected a total of seven pastors serving three specific congregations (Ogden, Brigham City, and Salt Lake City) and five circuits (Richfield, Hyrum, Mount Pleasant, Ovid, and Provo-Spanish Fork). There were two women missionaries and thirteen schools, with only nine women teachers named.<sup>15</sup>

In 1891 the Norwegian-Danish District numbered 114 members, plus 60 on trial. Fourteen churches and chapels lend support to the view that there were a considerable number of adherents who could not be counted as members. Attending the day schools were 405 pupils. Haagensen complained that pastors had requested transfers to the Colorado Conference, whereas he strongly favored continuing the mission until such time as it might be absorbed into a Norwegian-Danish conference on the coast. Already Utah letters were being addressed to *Vidnesbyrdet*, the West Coast publication established in 1889.<sup>16</sup>

The General Conference of 1892 authorized the Western Norwegian-Danish Mission Conference to include within its boundaries California, the states of the Northwest, and the territory of Utah. In 1895, when the mission conference became a full-fledged annual conference within Methodism, a Utah district was recognized. By 1898 the few members of the district were absorbed by the American Mission Conference of Utah, a temporary arrangement it appears. One of the last reports from Utah to reach the *Talsmand* in Chicago came in 1900, when Emil E. Mørk, presiding elder of the Richfield District, gave the appointments of that summer. He himself served Salt Lake City while performing his

<sup>14</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 25, 1889.

<sup>15</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, July 16, 1889.

<sup>16</sup> Haagensen, 167. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 23, 1891. *Vidnesbyrdet*, May 15, 1891.

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administrative duties. Only four other pastors were named.<sup>17</sup>

From the annual reports of the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference it is learned that Mørk and Emmanuel L. Nanthrup were appointed as missionaries to Utah in 1902. The following year Joseph Olsen, reporting for the Washington District, which then included the Utah field, made known that Nanthrup had not served the full year in Utah but had taken an appointment in Ballard, Washington. Appointments for the Washington District in 1903 listed Mørk and Christian J. Heckner as missionaries to Utah.<sup>18</sup>

For various reasons the Norwegian-Danish mission in Utah declined. Bishop Wiley, who died in China while on a world missionary tour, was undoubtedly correct when he once declared, "Utah is a hard ground to plow, even harder than China."<sup>19</sup> American immigrants who had only lately been attracted from Scandinavian Lutheranism to Mormonism were not easily persuaded to join a third denomination.

But there were more immediate causes for limited success. Scandal came to the Salt Lake City church in 1896 with the disclosure that the pastor had appropriated funds under false pretenses. Local newspapers and private citizens became so angry that some spoke of leveling the church building to the ground. It mattered little that the guilty parson, who had best remain anonymous, was excluded from the ministry by conference action. In 1897 the presiding elder, Eilert J. Lundegaard, made no attempt to conceal the damage to Norwegian-Danish Methodist activity. "The shadow of the tragedy of last year," said he, "hangs over the work in Salt Lake City and throughout the state of Utah."<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> There were 71 members in the entire Utah District in 1896, and only 59 in 1897. See *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1896), 37 and (1897), 35. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 6, 1900.

<sup>18</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1902), 3 and (1903), 14 and 26.

<sup>19</sup> Cited in Martin T. Larson, *Memorial Journal of Western Norwegian-Danish Methodism*, 8 (Portland, Oregon, 1944).

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1896), 5, 23, and 29 and (1897), 14.



In January of 1896 Utah was admitted to the Union and, in the opinion of the presiding elder, the idea gained ground that Mormonism was now worthy of respect. Mormon leaders also removed the language bar so that the Scandinavian tongues might be used in Mormon meetings. Hard times incident to the defeat of William Jennings Bryan and the free-silverites in 1896 contributed to difficulty in meeting church expenses. The seven-day week in the mines prevented attendance at Sunday services in many instances. And the restlessness of a transient and money-minded population threatened religious endeavors of any kind with failure from the outset.<sup>21</sup> In view of many unfavorable circumstances, therefore, the Norwegian-Danish mission in Utah yielded to the larger American church. Not least of the adverse factors was the general opposition of Mormonism to Protestantism as a whole.

<sup>21</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1896), 23 and (1897), 14; Emil E. Mørk for the Utah District and Eilert J. Lundegaard for the Montana-Utah District, respectively.

## *The Church Crosses the Rockies*

MANY FAVORING CIRCUMSTANCES beckoned Americans westward to the Pacific coast in the second half of the nineteenth century. The prospect of gold, despite declining yields of the precious stuff, still cast its spell. The revival of peacetime pursuits following the Civil War accelerated a migration that hostilities themselves had failed to check. The completion of the first transcontinental railroad in 1869 joined East and West with bonds of iron. The hard times of the 1870's, while forcing many to stay at home, persuaded other discouraged midwesterners to take unusual risks in hopes of better fortune. The salubrious climate of California came to the attention of restless folk. Others, like the Norwegians, envisioned a land reminiscent of their homeland in the eternal grandeur of the mountains, the mighty salmon-spawning Columbia, the stately forests of Washington, and the flying ocean spray. Opportunities in the West far exceeded those of any European country.

Methodist beginnings in the Far West antedated by many years the Norwegian-Danish activity. Until the treaty ending the Mexican War in 1848 California was in the hands of Mexico and not open to Protestant missionaries. But a letter published in the *Christian Advocate* (Chicago) on March 1, 1833, quickened the interest of Methodists in the Oregon country, north of California.<sup>1</sup> The correspondent, G. P. Disosway of Ohio, told of the inhumane practice of the Flathead Indians, who allegedly flattened the skulls of their young. Disosway based his assertion upon the word of William Walker, an Indian trader and a personal friend, who had seen a four-man delegation of Flathead Indians at St. Louis in 1831. The delegation sought a "black robe," a Roman Catholic priest, to return with them to their tribal home in Oregon.

<sup>1</sup> For the contents of this paragraph and the following paragraph the author is indebted in part to Ray Allen Billington's *Westward Expansion, a History of the American Frontier* (New York, 1949), 515-517.

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Generous financial contributions by *Christian Advocate* readers, plus a stirring appeal by President Wilbur Fisk of Wesleyan University, resulted in the overland trek of the Jason Lee party in 1834. Lee elected, however, to settle along the Willamette River rather than in the Flathead country, it being too late in the season, he explained, to ascend the Columbia. With substantial aid and encouragement from John McLoughlin, factor of the Hudson's Bay Company, the settlement prospered. It appears that Jason Lee devoted himself more to extolling the virtues of the Willamette Valley for his countrymen back east than to Indian missionary endeavors.

The initial achievements of Methodism among Norwegian and Danish immigrants of the Pacific coast are largely traceable to the unflagging energy and superior organizing ability of Carl J. Larsen. Born in Norway in 1849, he emigrated eventually with his parents to Chicago. He turned to Methodism in that city under the preaching of the one-time chaplain of the fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment, John H. Johnson of First Church. In 1875 Larsen moved to Oakland, California, and joined the American Methodists there. He was urged by his pastor in Oakland to conduct services in Scandinavian homes in the community, and in 1878 it became possible to rent a Seventh Day Adventist church for Sunday services. Larsen was named local preacher and organized a class of 24 members in 1879. A small church was built and dedicated in 1880. Under the California Conference for the next three years a Swedish pastor, O. Ferrell, served the congregation.<sup>2</sup>

In 1880 Larsen joined the California Conference on trial, leaving his skilled occupation as wood carver. In the words of his diary, "I also left a salary of \$130 a month and received \$50 a month for the privilege of preaching the Gospel to my countrymen." In 1881 Larsen completed a missionary tour of the Pacific Northwest and

<sup>2</sup> Martin T. Larson, *Memorial Journal of Western Norwegian-Danish Methodism*, 3 and 17. Martinus Nelson, "Fortieth anniversary of the Norwegian-Danish work on the Pacific coast," in *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1934), 27-28. Frederick Engebretsen, "Dr. C. J. Larsen, 1849-1934," in *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1935), 22. In 1920 the *Forhandlings Protokoll* became the *Journal and Yearbook*, published in English. Translations from the *Journal and Yearbook* will usually appear under *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference.

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concluded that many Norwegians and Danes needed the help of the church. In 1882 he was transferred to the Oregon Conference and was assigned to Portland. There, in the same year, he organized a congregation of 15 members, who purchased a lot and built a church in 1883. Reporting on the dedication service, the local newspaper, the *Oregonian*, commented upon the beauty of the structure, the pulpit and altar made by Larsen himself "with his own deft hands," the labor donated by the members, and the fact that no financial assistance was requested or received from the board of home missions and church extension. The total cost was \$6,000. After founding several congregations in Oregon, Larsen was appointed in 1884 to Tacoma, Washington, and thus became one of the charter members of the new Puget Sound Conference.<sup>3</sup>

Larsen's earliest efforts were among Scandinavians, with Norwegians in the majority. But on December 15, 1883, he was instrumental in forming a Norwegian-Danish congregation in Oakland.<sup>4</sup> The ten charter members had been active in Larsen's previous congregation in that city. The first pastor, John Jacobsen, had ministered to several congregations in the East. Much attracted by the scenery along the railroad, Jacobsen presently became a California booster. He had departed from Forest City, Iowa, his latest charge, in the month of March and viewed the green trees and gorgeous rose bushes beyond the Rockies with genuine awe. "Oh, what a beautiful country it is!" he exclaimed. "How richly it is blessed by the Giver of all good gifts!" He delivered his first sermon in Oakland on April 20, 1884. The Norwegians and Danes bought out the Swedish members, the vanguard of Swedish Methodism on the Pacific coast, and changed the name of the church from Scandinavian to Norwegian-Danish.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Larson, *Memorial Journal*, 4 and 24. Haagensen, 171.

<sup>4</sup> Haagensen, 168. Haagensen may be in error on this point. He refers (page 171) to the Portland congregation of 1882 as Norwegian-Danish. Several denominations, including the Reformed faiths and the Swedenborgians, had ministered in a small way to the Scandinavians. The first Scandinavian Lutheran church on the Pacific coast was organized in San Francisco in 1870; see Kenneth Bjork, "Hvistendahl's mission to San Francisco, 1870-75," in *Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, volume 16 (1950), 9-11.

<sup>5</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, May 28, 1884. Haagensen, 168-169.



Several other congregations had their beginnings in the 1880's. During Larsen's pastorate in Portland he visited Tacoma on occasion and brought into being a class there in April, 1884. In September he was appointed to the new Tacoma congregation and was succeeded in Portland by Christian N. Hauge, who was transferred from the Norwegian-Danish Conference of the Middle West. Larsen's effectiveness soon increased the Tacoma membership to the point where they could build a church along the main street, Tacoma Avenue, in 1885. In the period 1885-89 new opportunities presented themselves in Albina and Astoria in Oregon; LaCenter, Port Townsend, Spokane Falls (now Spokane), and Rockford circuit in Washington; and Moscow, Blaine, and Bear Creek in Idaho.

In 1887 Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, of Danish birth, was named to succeed John Jacobsen in the Oakland charge. For several years he had pioneered in Methodist activities in Denmark, editing the *Dansk Kristelig Talsmand* (Danish Christian Advocate) and his own temperance paper, *Afholds-Basunen* (The Temperance Trumpet). His career henceforth would be completed mainly on America's western shores. From Oakland Eltzholtz addressed his ministerial friends of the Middle West somewhat wistfully: <sup>6</sup>

Our countrymen are found scattered by the hundreds in many places throughout this great state, which has such a glorious future. But I am the only Norwegian-Danish preacher sent by our church to these people. We need at least two more men for this state. As I send my brotherly greetings I ask that you, when you see the sun setting in the west, will remember your humble brother roaming about on the far-away coast of the western sea.

Eltzholtz was to succumb to the balmy atmosphere and infectious optimism of the Bear Flag state. He sought to enlighten his friends back east on many topics, such as California's educational system, the climate, irrigation, artesian wells, big trees, fruits, wool, honey, land values, and, of course, church affairs.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1888), 40. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, January 31, 1918 (Eltzholtz diary).

<sup>7</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 19 and 26, and April 9, 1889.

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New advances were made in the years 1889 and 1890. Otter Christoffersen organized a congregation in Eureka, California. The manner and place of his conversion demonstrate, for some, the inscrutable ways of providence. Before the year 1880 one Edvard Nilsen, pastor of the Methodist society in Fredrikshald (now Halden), Norway, felt called to minister to Norwegian and Danish emigrants in New Zealand. In the course of time Otter Christoffersen, previously influenced by Haugean pietism, became spiritually revived under Nilsen's ministry in that island "down under." Presently he began to preach in New Zealand and, in 1889, he came with that in mind to Eureka. This lovely spot in California was to mean much in the life of a later pastor, Frederick Engebretsen, who also originated from Halden, and whose father had been converted in the Nilsen-led revival there in the 1870's.<sup>8</sup>

Eltzholtz, resident in Oakland, began to conduct services in San Francisco on Sunday afternoons as early as 1888. Grebert Andersen, another Dane, took his place in 1890, when Eltzholtz was transferred "back east" to the Norwegian-Danish Conference. First attracted to Methodism by Burrell Smith in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, in 1879, Andersen had recently graduated from the theological seminary in Evanston, Illinois. These were the modest beginnings of the later Central Church.<sup>9</sup>

Occasional contributions of Eltzholtz to the *Talsmand* testify to his virility as pastor in Oakland. Once he referred to the remarkable results of the evangelistic efforts of a former Norwegian actress, Mrs. Frederikke Nielsen, in his own church. God had always blessed the labors of women in his vineyard, he said, and he believed that Mrs. Nielsen, criticized in some quarters for her showmanship, was deserving of confidence. At a later date he chose to dispel certain rumors relative to his plans. Some friends in the East had been misled, he wrote, by well intentioned folk who had pretended to know his mind. They had said that he wished to

<sup>8</sup> Frederick Engebretsen in *Evangelisk Tidende*, September 18, 1930. Engebretsen wrote as the official correspondent for the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference.

<sup>9</sup> Haagensen, 170. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1890), 9. Arne O. Nilsen, "Central Methodist Church, a History," a golden anniversary booklet prepared by the pastor (San Francisco, 1945).

locate (to discontinue temporarily his membership in the conference), that he wanted to turn farmer, that he was about to give up the ministry because he had become a member of a syndicate for the founding of a city. They had spread the word that he had become disgusted with California, that his health was declining, and that he was even spitting blood. He punctured the rumors with scorn. He admitted that he had contemplated taking a year's leave of the ministry, but now he was fully decided on continuing in it.<sup>10</sup>

In Washington, about to achieve statehood, certain cities saw the beginning of Methodist activity among the Norwegians in 1889. Through the efforts of C. J. Larsen as presiding elder, a congregation came into being in Spokane. First to be appointed there was Egert M. Stangeland, who had been won to the Christian ministry by young Otto Sanaker in Leland, Illinois. At Rockford, near Spokane, J. C. Paulsen was appointed. For an interval, until Seattle eclipsed other settlements in Puget Sound, work was carried on at Port Townsend. In Seattle itself C. J. Larsen organized the membership in the same year, 1889, and conducted a quarterly conference in Fairhaven in 1890. Appointments of 1890 included also a South Bend circuit, which soon received three lots, adequate for both church and parsonage, from the Northern Pacific Railway.<sup>11</sup>

The first issue of *Vidnesbyrdet*, the official journal of Norwegian-Danish Methodism on the Pacific coast, appeared on September 15, 1889. Originally a semi-monthly emanating from Portland, Oregon, it was edited by John Jacobsen and John L. Eriksen, with Christian N. Hauge as manager. As reported by C. J. Larsen through the *Talsmand*, the publication was in the interest of the Norwegian-Danish mission, and all profits would be allocated to retired ministers and their families. Eriksen resigned in 1890, leaving Jacobsen as sole editor. Both Jacobsen and Hauge, the manager, served without remuneration. In fact, Jacobsen gave generously of his personal funds in order to keep the infant paper alive. At one

<sup>10</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, July 23 and October 15, 1889.

<sup>11</sup> M. T. Larson, 23-33. The communities of Fairhaven and New Whatcom were officially merged under the name of Bellingham in 1903.

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time the tract society of the Methodist Episcopal Church appropriated \$450 toward expenses. Under Stangeland *Vidnesbyrdet* was published weekly. In the fall of 1891 Haagensen, *Talsmand* editor, noted that *Vidnesbyrdet* had expanded from eight pages to twelve. He congratulated Stangeland. By 1892 *Vidnesbyrdet* had a budget of \$4,168. In 1895 it was necessary to raise \$270 among the pastors to reimburse the editor for his expenses. The editor usually served a church because of the shortage of pastors.<sup>12</sup>

Others who doubled in preaching and editing were Peter Martin Hansen, Martinus Nelson, and Christian Jørgen Heckner. Hansen, better known as Martin Hansen, had listened to sermons by O. P. Petersen and Christian B. Willerup in Norway and had joined the Methodists there, in Sarpsborg, in 1857. He had relieved Petersen, founder of Methodism in Norway, as director of the work there in 1871. In the 1870's his creative ability shone in the publication of a useful hymnal, *Zions Harpe*, the establishment of a bookstore and printing press, the beginning of *Børnevennen* (The Friend of the Children) and of *Evangelisk Kirketidende* (later *Kristelig Tidende*), and a children's home. He was Norway's first delegate to a General Conference, traveling to Cincinnati in 1880 for that purpose. At his own request, Hansen remained in the United States, taking the Chicago First Church pulpit of John H. Johnson, who went to Norway. After serving Brooklyn's Bethelship Church (1883-88) Hansen returned to his native land to head the theological school he himself founded in 1874 in Christiania (Oslo). In 1891 he crossed the ocean once more, to be transferred according to his choice to the Norwegian-Danish mission and appointed to Seattle. As editor of *Vidnesbyrdet* after 1893, he also pastored the Portland Second Church flock. C. August Peterson, himself an eloquent and effective preacher on the coast, was first attracted to Methodism through the influence of Martin Hansen.<sup>13</sup>

Martinus Nelson, another of *Vidnesbyrdet's* editors, had given

<sup>12</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, October 29, 1889, and November 3, 1891. H. P. Nelsen in M. T. Larson, *Journal*, 9.

<sup>13</sup> *Vidnesbyrdet*, December 26, 1895. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 17, 1907. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1908), 24.



his best to the Utah mission. In the Western Conference he served successively Portland, Eureka, and Oakland, with some detriment to his health. After taking a leave of absence his physical condition improved and he resumed his clerical activities. Hansen, like Christian Treider, had united with the Methodists in Norway in 1874 and had come to Chicago in 1881. In 1883 he was appointed to Perth Amboy, New Jersey. In the West he was to edit *Vidnesbyrdet* and its successor *Sambaandet* for a total of 22 years.<sup>14</sup>

Ole O. Twede, a son-in-law of Martin Hansen, did conspicuous work as editor of *Vidnesbyrdet* from about 1900 to 1917, when he requested retirement. He is reported as having served the McKee circuit and LaCenter within the Oregon District in 1901-02 while manipulating pencil and paste for the paper. His heart became lighter when, by 1903, a longstanding indebtedness of *Vidnesbyrdet* was erased. In the report of the conference publishing committee, the fortunate change had come about because of General Conference approval of an annual appropriation of \$1,000 and the economies practiced by the editor. Although there was reason for rejoicing in the fact that there were twice as many subscribers as church members, the committee expressed the need of a "larger and better paper" with fewer advertisements. During Twede's later years the Methodist Book Concern (now the Methodist Publishing House) subsidized the paper to the extent of \$1,200 annually. F. A. Scarvie became his successor, from 1917 to 1920, and H. P. Nelsen thereafter until the merger of *Vidnesbyrdet* with *Den Kristelige Talsmand* and *Østens Missionær* into the new *Evangelisk Tidende* in January, 1922.<sup>15</sup>

The General Conference of 1888 authorized the organization of the work on the Pacific coast into a Northwest Norwegian-Danish Mission. In the first meeting of the mission at Portland in 1889 Bishop Thomas Bowman met with nine pastors. Superintendent

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1929), 38. *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 9, 1939.

<sup>15</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1902), 16 and (1903), 22. H. P. Nelsen in M. T. Larson, 10. Nelsen deplored the merger. C. J. Larsen, superintendent of the Pacific District, reported 5,000 readers for *Vidnesbyrdet* in 1919. See *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1919), 21.

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C. J. Larsen reported at that meeting a total of ten congregations, with about 375 members, including those on probation, and seven Sunday schools. The mission touched the states of Oregon and Washington and the northern fringe of Idaho. Appointments of 1889 provided for 12 preaching points. In 1890 Larsen could state that there were 14 congregations.<sup>16</sup>

At the third annual meeting of the mission in Seattle in 1891 the effects of hard times in the country were seen in some churches, while progress was reported in others. The Spokane congregation lost 18 members who found it necessary to seek employment elsewhere. *Vidnesbyrdet* had increased its circulation. An interesting diversion from the usual conference routine came with John L. Eriksen's statement that Methodist doctrine did not coincide with his views and that he wished to withdraw from the Northwest Mission. Only a few months before, Eriksen had suggested in a letter to the *Talsmand* a joint meeting of Norwegian-Danish pastors from both sides of the Atlantic on the occasion of the world exposition to be held in Chicago in 1893. The meeting never took place. Eriksen joined the Unitarians.<sup>17</sup>

The conference of 1891 concerned itself largely with administrative plans. It was known that Martinus Nelson, presiding elder for the work in the Utah territory, favored union with the Northwest Mission as an alternative to absorption by the American church. Pastors in California and Montana also desired to unite with their ministerial brethren of the Northwest. Consequently, the General Conference of 1892 was petitioned to that effect.

At Portland in 1892 the Western Norwegian-Danish Mission Conference was formed. Bishop J. M. Walden, who presided, recommended that type of organization, since it would enjoy all the powers of an annual conference except that of electing delegates to the quadrennial General Conference. The conference

<sup>16</sup> Haagensen, 174-176. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, September 23, 1890. For a historical summary see *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1917), 21.

<sup>17</sup> Haagensen, 181. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 24, 1891. John L. Eriksen eventually edited *Superior Tidende* of Superior, Wisconsin. In the judgment of Carl W. Schevenius he remained more Methodist than Unitarian. Schevenius, while pastor in Duluth, met him frequently.

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reported a total of 567 members in full connection, and 77 additional on trial. There were 25 church buildings, 14 parsonages, and 25 Sunday schools with 677 pupils. Appointments in 1892 were as follows: <sup>18</sup>

### PACIFIC DISTRICT

C. J. Larsen, *Presiding Elder*

#### In California:

Eureka .....	Grebert Andersen
Fresno .....	O. Christophersen
Oakland .....	John Jacobsen

#### In Idaho:

Blaine and Emmanuel Grove .....	Lars Olsen
Moscow and Vollmer .....	J. S. Andersen

#### In Oregon:

Astoria and Puget Sound .....	L. Walby
Portland First Church .....	C. August Peterson
Portland Second Church .....	Christian N. Hauge
Portland circuit .....	Ole O. Twede

#### In Washington:

Aberdeen and Montesano .....	Ole Heggen
Fairhaven and New Whatcom .....	C. L. Westberg
LaCenter .....	J. Christensen
Seattle .....	Martin Hansen
Spokane .....	Ch. L. Hansen
Everett and Stanwood .....	P. M. Ellefsen
Tacoma .....	Eilert J. Lundegaard

Other places to be supplied

### UTAH-MONTANA DISTRICT

Martinus Nelson, *Presiding Elder*

#### In Idaho:

St. Charles and Ovid .....	H. S. Waaler
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#### In Montana:

Butte .....	Carl Ericksen
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#### In Utah:

Brigham and Ogden .....	N. P. Johnsen
Ephraim circuit .....	W. L. Hansen
Hyrum and Logan .....	J. Olsen
Levan and Santaquin .....	Peter N. Melby

<sup>18</sup> Haagensen, 185.

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Provo and Spanish Fork .....	O. Halversen
Richfield and Elsinore .....	Emil E. Mørk
Salt Lake City .....	Christian J. Heckner
Other places to be supplied	

Despite the nation-wide depression in 1893, some achievements were recorded. Everett completed a sanctuary, and New Whatcom acquired a chapel. New parsonages appeared in Eureka and Aberdeen. Oakland members purchased a ready-made structure from the Baptists. The Thanksgiving Day burning of the church in Salt Lake City challenged the constituency to raise a new structure, which they did by contracting a debt of \$5,000. A saving feature was the inclusion of a number of rooms for private rental.<sup>19</sup>

Utah pastorates demanded much evangelical fervor, pedagogical enthusiasm, and physical exertion. From Levan Peter N. Melby wrote in January, 1893, that he had spent Christmas with Emil E. Mørk in Richfield and had conducted services there at 6 and 11 a.m., and a "Gospel service" in the evening. On his way home to Levan he stopped off at Santaquin to hold a meeting. Upon his return to Levan he at once resumed his work with the day school from 9 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon, with many pupils. On Sunday evenings he preached to the young folk in English.<sup>20</sup>

There are sufficient evidences of growth in the early 1890's. The annual report of 1893 indicated a membership of 593 in full connection, 23 pastors serving 38 preaching points, and 26 church structures with an estimated total value of \$118,400. In addition, 766 children and older folk were registered in 27 Sunday schools. In 1895 the mission conference gave way to the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference. While the Utah picture was fading, encouraging words were coming from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Kalispell, and Butte. Central Church in San Francisco was organized with 17 members in 1895. The usual steps toward congregational independence were completed: a rental hall, a purchased lot, and a permanent sanctuary designed to accommodate 300 worshippers. Los Angeles Bethany grew from six members in 1895 to 62

<sup>19</sup> Haagensen, 186-187. M. T. Larson, 17.

<sup>20</sup> Melby to editor Stangeland, January 17, 1893, in *Vidnesbyrdet* (exact date unavailable).



in 1901. Westside Church of Kalispell, Montana, originated in 1895, as did the Scandinavian Church of Butte, where the state governor, J. E. Rickards, delivered an address on dedication Sunday. Yet the mission to the immigrants in the copper state operated on but a small scale. Only four pastors attended the annual Montana District preachers' meetings of 1895 and 1896 in Great Falls and Butte respectively.<sup>21</sup>

The years 1896 and 1897 were far from encouraging. Unemployment, scarcity of money, reduction in missionary funds, the extensive geographical spread of the work, and lust for secular entertainment sum up Larsen's view for the California District. With reference to Utah and Montana, Eilert J. Lundegaard is more specific. Economies of the silver states suffered from the low value of that precious commodity which the Populists and William Jennings Bryan were trying valiantly to redeem. The seven-day week in the mines prevented church attendance. A transient population seeking jobs and quick riches took little interest in religion. And the saloon, with its exciting music and sensuous atmosphere, flourished at the expense of more wholesome institutions. Lundegaard alluded to Anaconda as a rapidly growing city. Peter N. Melby had conducted services there in a union church, in which the Norwegian-Danish Methodists had a quarter-interest. Concluded Lundegaard deprecatingly, with ecumenical temperature at a low point, "But union churches and union Sunday schools are in general union humbug."<sup>22</sup>

In 1897 Bishop C. C. McCabe made known that he would like to have a mission opened in Alaska. He inquired of the dependable C. J. Larsen whether he would go, then appointed him to an "Alaska District" with responsibility for supplying St. Michaels,

<sup>21</sup> Haagensen's historical treatment ends with the year 1894. Conference minutes are available only for the years 1907-38, with those of 1909-10 and 1912-16 missing from the bound collection. Of the files of *Vidnesbyrdet*, only the whereabouts of volume 2 (1890) is known.

Haagensen, 189. M. T. Larson, 19, 21, and 38. Arne O. Nilsen, "Golden Anniversary" (San Francisco, 1945). Raymond S. Werner, in "Golden Jubilee" booklet (Los Angeles, 1946). *Minutes*, Montana District (1895 and 1896), in manuscript form and unpublished.

<sup>22</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1896), 15-18, and (1897), 16 and 19.

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Juneau, Skagway, Dyea, and Circle City. Referring to the gold seekers, McCabe said, "Most of the people will be disappointed, or sick, and some will die. They will need the Gospel." The intrepid Larsen left San Francisco for Seattle and boarded the steamer *City of Seattle* on October 6, 1897, bound for Juneau. It was Sunday on board and Bishop P. T. Rowe, returning to his work in Alaska, preached in the morning. Larsen preached in the evening. Nearly all the passengers attended the services. Larsen thought that the climate and the physical features of southeastern Alaska resembled those of southern Norway.<sup>23</sup>

The *City of Seattle* first touched at Ketchikan, 700 miles from Seattle. There a population of some 400 depended mainly upon salmon canneries for a living. Juneau, said Larsen, had a population of about 900. He found the people very friendly. After two weeks he departed for Skagway, which had grown from a colony of a dozen tents to a city of 10,000 almost overnight. At that time, Larsen explained, it was the most wretched and godless town on earth. It was the entry to White Pass, so eagerly sought by the treasure seekers. Soapy Smith, Skagway saloon keeper and legendary figure in gold rush history, maneuvered with his gang of outlaws along the trail of the pass.

Since other Protestant denominations were laboring at Skagway, Larsen decided to proceed to Dyea, gateway to Chilkoot Pass, leading to Lake Bennet. The town lay seven miles from Skagway by water. On November 10 Larsen left Skagway for Dyea in a rowboat, enduring a cold and stormy ride of three hours. There being no wharf at Dyea, the owner of the rowboat carried his passengers ashore.

The second day in Dyea (November 11, 1897) Larsen secured two lots for a church and one for a parsonage. He built a shack, 10 feet by 12, of boards, tarpaper, and batting. When he arrived he found 200 tents and a few log cabins. New arrivals were streaming in by the thousands. Larsen pitched his "Gospel tent," fur-

<sup>23</sup> C. J. Larsen, "The beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Mission in Alaska," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, October 25 and November 1, 1923. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1897), 6.

nished by Bishop McCabe, and began regular services, preaching to a procession, as he said, since all but a few businessmen were bound for dreamlands of fortune and stayed only a few days in Dyea. The tent soon became too cold for services, whereupon Larsen built a chapel, which he dedicated in December, 1897.

Among those who stopped at Dyea, in preparation for reaching Dawson via Chilkoot Pass, were some Methodists. Despite the attractions of gold, Larsen found them kind and helpful. But the arrival of his son Alfred in December pleased him the most. The excitement of gaining sudden wealth was coupled with deep tragedy when a snowslide in Chilkoot Pass snuffed out the lives of 56 men. Of these, 24 were buried in Dyea, and the remaining bodies were sent to their homes. Larsen observed, "It was indeed a solemn day as we went from grave to grave singing 'Nearer My God to Thee' and 'Jesus, Lover of my soul.' " Over 300 were present at the mass funeral, which evidently had only a temporary sobering effect. Dyea soon became as wicked as Skagway. Larsen once officiated at the funeral of two gamblers who had shot each other. An epidemic of spinal meningitis during the winter of 1897-98 kept him busy visiting the sick and burying the dead.

Eventually, on June 29, 1898, Larsen and his son arrived at Dawson. They found a population of 20,000, dwelling mostly in tents. Fortunately the cosmopolitan city was kept under control through a strict law enforcement by the Northwest Mounted Police. The Larsens departed in July by way of the Yukon River. They negotiated the treacherous White Horse rapids without a guide but prayed much with their eyes open! It took a long five minutes to make the passage. At Rampart City Larsen stayed and preached for several weeks. Finally, he left for Seattle from Unalaska on September 25, 1898, having traveled 11,290 miles, of which 1,670 were by rowboat and 150 on foot. Upon returning to California Larsen was appointed by Bishop McCabe to serve Juneau, Alaska, the place which was considered the most promising for permanent work. He departed from San Francisco with his family on November 14, 1898. In January of 1899 he organized a congregation of 18 members in Juneau. So ends Larsen's account

of his Alaska venture. His only son Alfred was to die in that country.<sup>24</sup>

It is reported that Raymond Robins, later associated with settlement house work in Chicago and with the Progressive Republican movement, was converted through Larsen's ministry in Alaska. In any event, Robins found other values than gold in his three years in the North. He came to respect Christianity as he saw it tested under conditions of strain in certain men of the gold rush.<sup>25</sup>

At the close of the nineteenth century Norwegian-Danish Methodism on the Pacific coast was serving 23 congregations, large and small. The congregations were organized into four districts: the California, the Oregon, the Washington, and the Montana-Idaho. While work was just commencing in some places, it was found advisable to retrench in others. In 1902 the conference disposed of the properties in Vollmer, Troy, and Bear Creek, all in the vicinity of Blaine, Idaho. During the ensuing year the Butte-Anaconda quarterly conference sold their interest in the Anaconda union church to Swedish Baptists, the money (\$300) to be applied to the debt of the Butte congregation. The departure of Christian N. Hauge who, like Twede, was a son-in-law of the venerable Martin Hansen, was considered a loss, but a gain to the Wesleyan Methodists. Nevertheless, *Vidnesbyrdet* could report a general increase of 15% in lay membership for the church year 1903-04. No doubt some of the increase was at the expense of churches back east. As H. P. Nelsen put it in a letter of 1904 to the *Talsmand*, when the Ballard (Washington) Church choir sang at

<sup>24</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922), 38-39.

<sup>25</sup> Raymond Robins, born in 1873, became head of the Northwestern University Settlement. He ran for the office of United States Senator from Illinois in 1914 and served as chairman of the national convention of the Progressive Republican party in 1916. He befriended organized labor and advocated land value taxation. In 1915 the National Christian Social Evangelistic Campaign counted him among its leaders. During the First World War he was commissioned lieutenant-colonel in command of the American Red Cross mission in Petrograd (now Leningrad). He shared leadership in world peace activities and championed the Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment. He disappeared mysteriously in the 1920's. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1935), 22. Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1922), 450 and 488n. *Who's Who in America*, volume ix, 1916-17 (Chicago, 1917), 2085.



the annual conference session he was reminded of Chicago, where some of the lead voices had been singing 20 years before in the choir of Chicago First Church.<sup>26</sup>

In 1904 C. August Peterson began preaching services on Vashon Island while he was pastor of Seattle First Church. This eminent man, endowed with unusual natural speaking ability, became known in time as "bestefar på Solvik" (grandfather in Solvik). He makes no secret of his purchase of 80 acres of good land on the island and his sale of ten-acre tracts to "good Christian Scandinavians." Other pastors and laymen also invested in the land so reminiscent of the old country. Dedication of the church at Cove—for that was the name—by presiding elder C. Lyng Hansen, another nestor on the coast, came in 1907. Here too in years to come would be held at Beulah Park many a Sunday school and Epworth League convention, summer institute, and camp meeting.<sup>27</sup>

A story of unusual pathos, though perhaps not directly relevant to this historical sketch, is that of the San Francisco earthquake and fire of Wednesday, April 18, 1906, as told by Peter N. Melby, pastor of the church in that city. The sun set as it had for ages on the broad Pacific on Tuesday, but the great metropolis on the coast, with a population of 500,000 souls, was to be shaken from its foundations early the next morning and to become the victim of a raging fire. "Wednesday at 5:13 a.m.," writes Melby, "will signify sorrow in the history of the state and of the nation as well. The 42 seconds of actual earthquake were a terrifying experience, beginning with a noisy rumble. High and low areas moved in wave-like motion. Buildings bowed to each other across the streets, as if bidding farewell to their occupants, many of whom were thrown from their beds. On Valencia Avenue the earth sank eight feet. Only the fourth story of the Valencia Hotel remained above ground. People were carried from the ruins. The city hall, which

<sup>26</sup> M. T. Larson, 32. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 13, 1904. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1903), 12 and 23.

<sup>27</sup> M. T. Larson, 29. C. August Peterson, "Trediveaarsfest i Cove," *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 26, 1936. Peterson died on March 21, 1937. He had been very active in the Sons of Norway lodge and in Nordmændenes Sangforening in Seattle.

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is said to have taken twenty years to build, was destroyed in twenty seconds.”<sup>28</sup>

To the destruction of the quake were added the ravages of fire. Thousands of those trapped in the ruins were devoured. Many begged the soldiers and police to shoot them, to spare them from a more horrible death. Many believed that the day of judgment had come. On Thursday, the day after the quake, the business section lay in ashes behind a wall of fire a mile long. The sun had turned to darkness. Martial law required that all liquor be destroyed, and 3,500 licenses were revoked. Friday morning it was announced that the fire had been checked, only three blocks from Melby's home, from which he and his wife had fled. Fifty church buildings were consumed, among them the Norwegian-Danish Methodist. The congregation then sought housing. The church property was valued at \$6,000 and was insured for only \$1,150. Melby was convinced that, although fund-raising would be difficult for a time, God had presented to him and his parishioners a great future in San Francisco.

The year 1907 brought a shortage of ministers. Listed in the conference minutes of that year were the names of 21 pastors in full connection, four on trial, and two retired, namely Martin Hansen and John Jacobsen. Reporting for the Rocky Mountain District, N. L. Hansen claimed 15 preaching points but only six men to occupy the pulpits. He inquired whether the work could not be accelerated. Would it not be possible, he asked, to support a seminary in connection with one of the American theological institutions? He deplored the departure of some candidates for the ministry from the conference.<sup>29</sup>

That the foreign-language church had a relationship to American institutions of higher learning is shown in C. Lyng Hansen's membership on the board of trustees of Puget Sound University at Tacoma and C. J. Larsen's on the board of Willamette University at Salem, Oregon. They were elected as representatives by the annual conference. The ministerial shortage was again noted in 1911 when C. August Peterson, on the conference floor, expressed

<sup>28</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, June 7, 1906.

<sup>29</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1907), 18.

the hope that young men would commit themselves to training in both English and Norwegian, and that Puget Sound, Willamette, and the University of California would assist in the process to the extent of employing the Scandinavian languages in some of their instruction.<sup>30</sup>

By 1915 an opportunity to study Scandinavian literature in an accredited institution of higher learning came in the person of John O. Hall. Fresh from earning his Ph.D. degree from Columbia University, this man, who once made the great decision at a camp meeting where the aging O. P. Petersen was speaking, accepted the chair of sociology at Willamette University. Although the hopes of the conference education committee for a Norwegian class in theology at one of the leading colleges in the West were rather vain, the committee took pleasure in recommending to the young folk the study of Scandinavian literature, apart from sociology, under Hall's instruction. Regularly the committee recommended higher education, not excluding studies in the theological seminary in Evanston.<sup>31</sup>

At times the Norwegian-Danish brethren on the Pacific coast viewed American higher education with a critical eye. In 1920 the conference adopted a resolution protesting the use of the name "Wesleyan Waltz" by schools of dancing. They stated further, "We deplore most sincerely if any Methodist college should lift the ban on dancing or any amusement against the teaching of our beloved church." For the sake of emphasis probably, the resolution was printed in English, whereas the conference minutes remained Norwegian.

Norwegians beyond the Rockies felt the impact of heavier immigration from Europe. In 1907 C. Lyng Hansen reported for the Pacific Coast District that in a single year nearly 40,000 Norwegians and Danes had arrived in America. He anticipated a great future for his own district, based in part upon a 12% increase in membership for the year. But certain pulpits remained empty. In 1913 the Pacific Coast District and the Rocky Mountain

<sup>30</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1908), 10, and (1911), 16.

<sup>31</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1915), 10 and 21, and (1922), 37.

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District were united in order that one superintendent might be freed for pastoral work.<sup>32</sup>

When in 1911 H. P. Nelsen interpreted the stages of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the Far West, he stated that the mission society of the American church had carried the responsibility at first. Then came the poor times, and serious difficulties for the church. In the third stage, in the 1890's, it was necessary to salvage what had nearly been destroyed. Many had lost both money and religion. Some churches were compelled to close. At the time of his writing Nelsen deplored the lack of cooperation on the part of the younger generation, who would attend a Sunday evening youth meeting but leave almost in a body when the evening church service began. He proposed a more aggressive evangelism. He felt inclined, he said, to pray with John Wesley: "Give us a recurrence of the Revival without the extravagance, if it may be so; if not, give us the Revival with the extravagance."<sup>33</sup>

The First World War intensified American prejudice against "foreigners" and the use of "unpatriotic" tongues, thus forcing a decline in foreign-speaking activities. It is clear, however, that for Norwegian-Danish Methodism the struggle to maintain the work at peak strength had already started before the war. In 1915 C. J. Larsen pointed out that Sunday schools, conducted in the English language, were not supplying the church with members as before. Nor was total Sunday school strength being maintained. In the single year 1915-16 membership declined from 655 to 569 pupils in the conference. In view of the drop in church membership also, from 924 to 853 in the same interval, the decrease in Sunday school enrollment is not surprising.<sup>34</sup>

Reports at the annual conference session of 1917 gave striking evidence of contracting activities. One finds only three places mentioned that were not listed in 1900, namely Cove, Washington;

<sup>32</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1907), 14-15. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 9, 1913. Following the General Conference of 1908, the title "district superintendent" replaced that of "presiding elder."

<sup>33</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, February 16, 1911.

<sup>34</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1915), 19 and 26, and (1916), 26.



Helena, Montana; and Tokay, California. Nineteen preaching points listed in 1900 are not to be found in the reports of 1917. At least two others, Missoula and Anaconda, Montana, had come and gone in the meantime. In 1900 there were 44 preaching points, in 1917 only 25.

From the standpoint of active membership the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference held its own in the longer period from 1895 to 1917. While in 1895 the conference claimed 628 members, the figures for 1917 were 938, including 154 non-residents. The number of church buildings declined, of course, with the decrease in preaching points, from 30 in 1895 to 25 in 1917. A sign of greater comfort for ministers and their families was an increase in the number of parsonages, from 7 to 25. No minister, it would seem, lacked a parsonage in 1917, there being only 23 men appointed in that year. The 27 pastors of 1895 were not as fortunate.

Both district superintendents spoke encouragingly of the year 1917. For the California District Martinus Nelson announced that among his 200 members \$8,305 had been raised for various purposes, an average of \$41 per member. For the Pacific District C. J. Larsen pointed out that many young men were in the armed forces but that membership mounted nevertheless. The Pacific coast, he said, was yet in its childhood, with people moving about restlessly, some into the rural areas and others to Alaska.

Like the American people in general, those of Norwegian and Danish descent saw the First World War as a study in black and white. Germany's invasion of Belgium in 1914, the unrestricted submarine warfare of 1915 and 1917, the jingoistic utterances of Kaiser Wilhelm II, combined with the natural inclination to side with Great Britain, all worked in a single direction. President Woodrow Wilson's apparent dislike for war, expressed by his supporters in the presidential campaign of 1916, and his characterization of the international conflagration as a fight to save democracy and a war to end all wars, struck chords of sympathy everywhere in America and among the Allied peoples.

In the session of 1917 the Western Conference sent a pledge of loyalty to President Wilson. A touching resolution of dedication,

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phrased in rather ornate English, followed in 1918: <sup>35</sup>

188 young men, noble peers, the choicest of our young manhood from our own congregations, saw the gleam in the mountain peaks of service, the opportunity for heroic deeds, and courageously rallied to the colors.

Inspired by the deeds of our forefathers, remembering the 15th Wisconsin Regiment and the grand history of our beloved republic, beholding a bleeding Belgium, a devastated France . . . they went to stake their lives, their all, following the "Star Spangled Banner," bringing honor to America, blessing to mankind, and Glory to God.

We do here and now dedicate ourselves to the cause of freedom and Christian democracy.

In the absence of Bishop W. O. Shepard, because of the death of his son, C. J. Larsen was unanimously elected chairman at the conference session of 1918. In his review of the activities for the year on the Pacific District Larsen remarked, "Although we are discouraged over the fact that the world is writing its history in blood, we are thankful to God because we are a part of a nation that is fighting unselfishly for the triumph of righteousness and freedom in the world." Patriotic meetings had been held over the district, he said, adding, "Patriotism is not dependent on birth-place but on principles and spirit." Speaking for the conference rather than for the district alone, he announced that \$620 had been received for the government's war fund and that some of the 188 men in service had given their lives. On a more religious note he concluded, "The Centenary drive is well organized. Some things the government cannot do." <sup>36</sup>

Larsen's district report in 1919 re-emphasized the wartime handi-

<sup>35</sup> The telegram was read by C. August Peterson and ordered sent. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1917), 7, and (1918), 15-16. The resolution of 1918 bore no signatures.

<sup>36</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 24, 1918 (an item from *Vidnesbyrdet*). *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1918), 5. Authorized by the General Conference of 1916, the Methodist Centenary was intended to observe the beginnings of foreign missionary work with a financial drive commencing at the close of the First World War. The following goals were set up: \$80,000,000 for home and foreign missionary fields; \$25,000,000 for war reconstruction work; and \$115,000,000 for general benevolences. See Raymond J. Wade's foreword to *The World Service of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (Chicago, 1923), p. v; edited by Ralph E. Diffendorfer.

caps. "The demands of the military, the flu, which closed our churches for several months, the Centenary collections, and the church-press agitation concerning the dissolution of foreign-speaking conferences have added to the difficulty of the work. We are not attempting to build a Norway or a Denmark in this country. There are things that are greater than language, and they are the salvation of souls and love to God and our fellow men. We are not competing with the English-speaking congregations. We are one with them in everything except language."<sup>37</sup>

Financially, the churches encountered both ups and downs in 1921-22. Larsen complained of a slump in Centenary contributions for the Pacific District, in commemoration of a century of American Methodist missionary endeavor. On the other hand, Martinus Nelson was pleased to report for his California District that the quota had been topped and that membership had increased by 30%. The same district improved in Centenary giving in 1922 and continued its membership gains. The organization of four districts in 1922 (California, Oregon, Rocky Mountain, and Washington) suggests either an expectancy of continued growth or a more convenient distribution of labor. District superintendents, as before, carried pastoral responsibilities.<sup>38</sup>

Membership gains could have been better, in the opinion of Larsen and Melvin L. Olson of Los Angeles. Larsen asserted that the greatest problem was the young people, most of whom preferred the English language in services of worship. "Today, outside of the pulpit," he conceded, "nearly all our ministerial work is conducted in English." Melvin Olson cited a weakness of a different sort. Noting that many were received by transfer from eastern communions, he deplored the circumstance that others sought freedom from their former church obligations. "Many who at one time were active in the East have cooled off out here," he declared. In the words of H. P. Nelsen at a later date, the motiva-

<sup>37</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1919), 20. A sign of changing needs was the shift from Teutonic to Roman type in the conference minutes of 1911.

<sup>38</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1921), 19, and (1922), 20 and 35.

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tion differed from that of the original Wise Men from the East. Not without reason F. A. Scarvie inquired, "Would it be advantageous for our work out here to dissolve our conference and go over to the Americans?" Abraham Vereide, more skilled in the English language, had an answer: "We have hardly begun, although we are 34 years old on the coast. If we can't do it in one language we can carry on in another."<sup>39</sup>

C. J. Larsen's retirement in 1922 constitutes a milestone of more than personal significance. It fell to the lot of Vereide and C. August Peterson, Larsen's venerable colleague, to frame a fitting tribute to the 73-year-old veteran. They recounted the story of his 42 years of active service. They saw him as a young man standing on the conference floor in Portland in 1889. At that time, they said, the work had been going on for seven years, and for the first two years he was alone. They retraced his hazardous mission to Alaska during the gold rush. "You are an artist," they stated, "and may you take all the experiences of your long working day and paint from them a beautiful picture." The *Pacific Christian Advocate* (Portland), speaking for American Methodists, also commented generously upon Larsen's artistry, as well as "remarkable genius, combining exceptional ability as an evangelist and missionary with qualities as a leader and administrator." His fine paintings of outdoor scenes, the *Advocate* mentioned, were to be found decorating the walls of luxurious homes throughout the Northwest. He was credited with carving a seal of the State of California from wood representing the different kinds of trees in the state. After being displayed at the main gate of the world's exposition in San Francisco in 1915, the seal was placed in the museum of Golden State Park in San Francisco. For the twenty church structures built by him, beginning with Oakland, he was his own architect. In 1923 Willamette University conferred upon

<sup>39</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1921), 24, and (1923), 36. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, June 27, 1918, and June 23, 1921. *Evangelisk Tidende*, May 17, 1923. *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, p. 61.

Vereide spoke as superintendent of the Washington District. During the First World War he ministered as a Y.M.C.A. worker to the soldiers at Fort Lawton, Warden, and Camp Lewis while continuing as pastor in Seattle.



him the honorary degree of doctor of divinity. After residing in Portland, Oregon, for a number of years, Larsen died in Marshfield, Oregon, in 1934.<sup>40</sup>

Achievements of the Western Conference are reflected in statistics as well as in personalities. The statistician's report of 1907 indicates that nine churches had a combined membership of 752. The number of congregations rose rapidly, reaching 24 in 1919, but membership had risen to only 954. The peak number of congregations was 26, in 1928. The number of members probably never exceeded 1,300. Final statistics, for 1938, gave 19 churches and 1,178 members. The conference dissolved in 1939.<sup>41</sup>

Sunday school and Epworth League enrollments illustrate a similar rise and fall, with Sunday schools holding their own more successfully. The 18 schools of 1907 with their 731 pupils grew to 24 schools in 1930 with 1,543 children and young people. In 1938 the number had fallen to 17 schools and 1,150 pupils. No Epworth League statistics are available for the earlier years, but by 1911 there were 514 members. Possibly the reason for the statistical lag is that local young people's societies were not yet organized as Epworth Leagues. The year 1924 marks the maximum in Epworth League strength, a membership of 878. It declined to 519 by 1938. The number of chapters appears to have varied from 12 to 15. That certain of them were very active is evident. The Oakland league of 100 members, for example, supported four native missionaries abroad. Two Epworth League institutes were held every summer, one for the California District at Mount Hermon and the other for the Pacific Northwest District at Cove, Vashon Island, Washington. Originally Abraham Vereide purchased the Vashon Island tract for Seattle First Church. It was incorporated in 1918 as the Beulah Park Camp Meeting Association, for the benefit of all the churches.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922), 38-39. *Evangelisk Tidende*, October 12, 1922; July 5, 1923; June 28, 1934.

<sup>41</sup> The minutes of 1907 are the earliest accessible. Minutes of 1924 (p. 45) report a total of 1,257 members. Because of marginless binding, that particular column of the statistician's report is difficult to read for the late 1920's.

<sup>42</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende*, August 2, 1923. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922). Larson, *Memorial Journal*, 12.

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To some extent Epworth League energies were directed toward sailors' missions, with pastors guiding the work. An insight into varied types of services is gained from the report of Robert P. Petersen, superintendent of the California District. He announced that Andrew Odegaard had visited hundreds of sailors on ships anchored at San Francisco and in hospitals there and in Oakland. Odegaard had secured employment for some, had helped others to obtain citizenship papers, taken care of their money, and brought them into contact with the church, which was equipped with an attractive reading room. Many attended prayer meetings and Sunday services.<sup>43</sup>

Frederick Engebretsen briefed the conference on the historical background of missionary work among seamen in San Francisco, where the first full time man for that purpose had been requested. C. N. Hauge assumed the responsibility there in 1920. Three ministers and three laymen followed, each for a year or two, until in 1929 Engebretsen himself became the seamen's pastor.<sup>44</sup>

The San Pedro mission, on the coast south of Los Angeles, won for Engebretsen the Order of St. Olaf decoration from King Haakon VII of Norway. That the work was reaching major proportions is revealed in Engebretsen's report of 1935. He observed that Scandinavian vessels were arriving in larger numbers. During that year, 369 Norwegian and over 400 Swedish or Danish ships had anchored at San Pedro. Scandinavian seamen in the American merchant marine were also aided. By 1936 plans for a parsonage were under way. "This is a place," said Engebretsen, "where you will have a large congregation one Sunday and an entirely different one the next, both as to size and personnel; hence, the support must come largely from outside the local church."<sup>45</sup>

Similar in purpose to that of the seamen's mission was the Bethany Home for Women in Los Angeles. Under O. A. Doblough a building was rented in 1918 several blocks from the church. It provided a Christian environment for numerous Scandinavian

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1924), 27.

<sup>44</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1931), 24-25.

<sup>45</sup> *Golden Jubilee; Bethany Methodist Church* (Los Angeles, 1946), 30 and 36. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1935), 17-18.

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servant girls. Miss Gyda Solem donated her services as matron. In 1921 many applicants were turned away. The girls' club of the church operated the home, which in 1922 provided shelter and comfort to 150 women.<sup>46</sup>

In the years 1924-30 more serious consideration was given to the possibility of expanding the Scandinavian mission into Canada. Vereide, speaking for his Oregon-Washington District in 1924, explored the prospects of ministering in British Columbia, where C. N. Hauge had begun the work as early as 1903. Until 1923 pastors from the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference had been supported by the Methodist Church of Canada. Then the Scandinavians were invited to join the English churches, but they voted overwhelmingly to seek affiliation with the Norwegian-Danish organization. Thus the work became a mission, with episcopal approval. Said Vereide, "The work has prospered both in Vancouver and in Matsquie. I counted 42 newcomers one Sunday night on the front seats during my recent visit. Work has also begun at Westminster and three other centers."<sup>47</sup>

Norwegian-Danish financial support of the Canadian venture proved to be impracticable. Melvin Olson reported in 1925 that the Wesleyan Methodists, then incorporated in the United Church of Canada, were supervising the work in British Columbia. In line with his suggestion a conference committee recommended discontinuance of monetary support, partly because the United Church was able to assume responsibility and partly owing to the difficulty of administering work across the international border. The Canadian church did aid the mission financially but depended upon men of the Norwegian-Danish connection to serve the immigrants. F. A. Scarvie took up the challenge in 1926.<sup>48</sup>

Opportunities for more effective missionary work in Canada took on a new complexion temporarily when in 1928 the Canadian church agreed to erect a building costing \$75,000, of which the

<sup>46</sup> Larson, *Memorial Journal*, 20. *Golden Jubilee*, 18 ff.

<sup>47</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1924), 22. Larson, *Memorial Journal*, 31 and 39. Hauge was succeeded after four years by Ole Heggen (1907-11) and E. L. Nanthrup (1911-19).

<sup>48</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1925), 26, and (1926), 31. Olson was superintendent for the Pacific Northwest District.

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Norwegian-Danish Conference would raise \$10,000. The proposal originated with the Norwegian-Danish organization. One reads of the pastoral activities of Chr. Martinsen and Hogbarth Elvigen in 1928-29 in the Vancouver Mission, but little is mentioned after that date. The United Church of Canada authorized Martinsen to investigate conditions among the Scandinavians of Alberta, but no permanent mission was established there.<sup>49</sup>

An incidental factor relative to the Canadian mission is that many immigrants in Canada had the United States as their ultimate destination. They were obliged to wait a year or more to enter the country under the national origins quota established by Congress in 1924. According to the law, 2% of the number of nationals of a given country resident in the United States in 1890 might enter annually after 1924. Obviously, the peoples of northern Europe were more favored by the quota than the nationals of southern and eastern Europe. When proposals to change the law were rumored, Scandinavian Americans felt uneasy. The Western Conference registered its concern in a resolution to the effect that "the present quotas be retained after July 1, 1927." The conference feared discrimination against northern and western Europeans.<sup>50</sup>

Methodist successes among Norwegian and Danish immigrants and their descendants on the Pacific coast gradually declined in the 1930's, a decade of economic depression as well. Gone was the earlier optimism encouraged by the heavy concentration of Scandinavian population.<sup>51</sup> Vanished also were the years of maximum monetary contributions as, for example, in 1927 when the Western Conference ranked first in all Methodism in World Service giving.<sup>52</sup> Revealing of a shrinking constituency was the sale of church

<sup>49</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1928), 22, and (1929), 26. Chr. Martinsen, "Lidt fra Canada," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, January 23, 1930.

<sup>50</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1926), 39, and (1929), 26.

<sup>51</sup> Superintendent Melvin Olson referred to the "prime opportunity" of Seattle First Church in 1925. Seattle, he said, had 20,000 Norwegians and 10,000 Danes and was destined to become the greatest metropolis on the Pacific coast, or at least in the Pacific Northwest. He estimated a population of 100,000 Norwegians and Danes in the State of Washington. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1925), 26.

<sup>52</sup> World Service, a follow-up to the Centenary Movement, was designed to meet



property in Tokay in 1938. "For years," said David C. Hassel, "we have been unable to do any work here. The old members have moved away, and our church has failed to reach the new people who have moved in." Many of the later arrivals were Spanish-speaking. At Tokay the Bethany Old People's Home and 40 acres of land purchased by the conference in 1913 were likewise sold. Located near Stockton, about 100 miles inland from San Francisco, the home pre-dated the congregation, but apparently it ceased to function before the church property was sold. At the annual meeting in San Francisco in 1939 the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference, with Bishop James C. Baker presiding, was dissolved. The once foreign-speaking congregations were transferred to the respective American conferences within the bounds of which they were located.<sup>53</sup>

Beginning with Carl J. Larsen's organization of a Scandinavian congregation in Oakland in 1880, Norwegian-Danish Methodist progress in the Far West was insured by strong personal leadership and by a steady influx of immigrants and easterners. Larsen and his colleagues, together with a loyal core of layfolk, witnessed the expansion of once rather independent efforts into a mission conference and later the establishment of a fully recognized annual conference. For a period of years the arrival of immigrants directly from Norway and Denmark stimulated the growth of the mission beyond the great divide. Eventually, however, charter members passed on, not always to be replaced by their second generation sons and daughters, who tended to favor the English language and American ways. Having fulfilled its worthy purpose, the church that crossed the Rockies surrendered its identity to the larger American communion, which would live to see many a sunset, and many a morning.

the increased need of home and foreign missions. It began in the 1920's and continues to the present day.

In the annual meeting Bishop Thomas Nicholson read portions of a letter from Raymond A. Wade (later a bishop) stating that the conference had given \$4.46 per capita to World Service and \$49.80 per capita for all purposes. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1927), 13.

<sup>53</sup> Larson, *Memorial Journal*, 22. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 9, 1913. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1920), 33, and (1938), 15.

## *The Conference Reaches Maturity*

MANY FACTORS CONTRIBUTED toward the growth of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America. Sons and daughters, reared in Christian homes, were wont to cast their lot churchwise with their parents. The evangelistic arm of the church reached out to quicken into life hundreds of Scandinavians no longer of newcomer status. But the most telling advantage to church membership rolls was immigration, which reached avalanche proportions in the years from 1890 to 1914. Well before the crest of immigration in 1907, Norwegian-Danish Methodist strength increased remarkably.

Anniversary observances of 1891 and 1901 served as reminders of the progress made since the organization of the first congregation in Cambridge, Wisconsin, in 1851. A fortieth anniversary celebration in Chicago First Church in March, 1891, was followed by another in November in Cambridge, where five charter members joined with pastors and layfolk from near and far in an inspiring *Mindefest*.<sup>1</sup>

At the annual conference session of 1891 in Chicago First Church eight men were received on trial into the pastoral ranks. Three more were accepted the following year. Fittingly for the anniversary, O. P. Petersen was transferred in from the New York East Conference and was appointed to Minneapolis First Church. It was reported that since 1886, within the short space of five years, lay membership had risen from 2,700 to 4,100, while the number of pastors had increased from 29 to 41.<sup>2</sup>

The pioneering spirit of the 1890's inspired visions of expansion into hitherto untouched areas. The appeals of Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, who administered the new Omaha District, may serve as examples, making allowance for his exuberant literary style and for the lesser role played by the Danes, who were relatively numerous on his district but a distinct minority in Norwegian-Danish

<sup>1</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 10 and November 24, 1891.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 33. Andrew Haagensen, *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider Havet*, 138.

## THE CONFERENCE REACHES MATURITY

Methodism as a whole. Through the pages of the *Talsmand* Eltzholtz called attention to vacancies for young men "full of the Holy Spirit and of faith." "Young brethren!" he wrote rhetorically, "The stream of popular movement is westward. Come out and help us guide this mighty movement in the right direction."<sup>3</sup>

Eltzholtz's first report emphasized the geographical spread and the missionary aspect of the Omaha District. He had travelled 12,000 miles during the year. Opportunities for development he described as wonderful. Between Des Moines, Iowa, and Albert Lea, Minnesota, lay some of the most prosperous Norwegian settlements, yet the only Methodist work among them was in Forest City, Iowa. "What is one preacher among so many thousands of people!" he declared.<sup>4</sup>

Eltzholtz went on to speak glowingly of opportunities in Nebraska, where Danes had settled. Among these "Danish legions" there was only one organized Methodist congregation, namely in Omaha. He had visited Laramie and Cheyenne in Wyoming and found a scattering of Norwegians and Danes. "Eventually," said he, "we should possess a line of mission stations from the shores of Lake Michigan across Wyoming to the Golden Gate on the Pacific Coast." He regretted that he had not seen his way clear to explore the Black Hills field which, however, attracted him not because of its intoxicating (*berusende*) gold mines. He closed with the observation that, given any migratory movement at all, Scandinavians would be obliged to go west. Canadian and Southern climates and natural sympathies with the North had determined it so.

Methodism had meanwhile made great strides in Norway and Denmark. Eltzholtz reported to the conference session of 1894 that, as of 1892, there were 129 preachers in the two Scandinavian countries and the United States combined, and 11,442 members in full connection in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, and the United States together.<sup>5</sup> If there were 4,100 members in America in 1891, it must be assumed that the number of Methodists in Norway and

<sup>3</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, February 17, 1891. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1929), 46; memorial to Eltzholtz by Ole Røhrstaff.

<sup>4</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 17.

<sup>5</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1894), 16.

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Denmark already exceeded the number of Norwegian and Danish adherents in the United States.

The following congregations had their origin in the 1890's:

<i>Chicago</i>	Appleton (1899)
Kedzie (1892)	Elbow Lake (1899)
Emmaus (1895)	
Bethany (1898)	<i>Michigan</i>
	Muskegon (1893)
<i>Illinois</i>	Manistee (1893)
Dwight (1893)	Ludington (1893)
<i>Wisconsin</i>	<i>Iowa</i>
West Superior (1891)	Rutland (1892)
Hayward (1893)	Lake Mills (1893)
Kenosha (1894)	
Arkdale (1899)	<i>North Dakota</i>
<i>Minnesota</i>	Valley City (1894)
Stephen (1893)	Hamlin (1898)
Lyon Township (1893)	Willow City (1898)
Milan (1893)	<i>Nebraska</i>
Clifford (1898)	Fremont (1892)
Hendricks (1898)	Kennard (1897)

Expansion continued into the twentieth century, the total number of congregations reaching a peak in 1906. Figures will illustrate the trend from 1880 to 1914: <sup>6</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Active Members</i>	<i>Congregations</i>	<i>Pastors</i>
1880	2,266	43	24
1890	3,902	70	48
1900	4,640	91	66
1906	5,102	99	63
1907	5,027	99	64
1910	4,984	94	56
1914	5,016	95	75

From the foregoing picture it may be deduced that the period of expansion came to an end in 1906. Between 1906 and 1914 there were no appreciable gains or losses, since the number of congrega-

<sup>6</sup> *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); statistical section, page 49.



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tions declined slightly, from 99 to 95, but the membership remained practically stationary. On the other hand, pastoral strength increased.

Of the congregations which came into being in the late 1880's and the 1890's Moreland, Kedzie, Emmaus, and Bethany, all in Chicago, were to prove more longlived than most. Moreland (later Austin, and still later Asbury) owed its beginning to First Church folk who had moved farther west. Incorporation and church dedication came in 1886, in the time of Oluf A. Wiersen, whose four daughters, all public school teachers, would be a bulwark of strength there in years to come.<sup>7</sup>

In 1889 certain members of the Maplewood Avenue Church established a mission and conducted services in a store on Kedzie Avenue. Useful there in the work of the next three years were Søren Nielsen, a Danish class leader; Harald Christensen, a seminary student from Evanston; and Nels E. Simonsen, seminary president. Hans P. Bergh organized the congregation, with the help of Christensen. A church costing \$2,500 was completed in 1894, thanks to the generosity of friends from Maplewood Avenue and from First Church (American) on Clark Street and to a loan from the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension.<sup>8</sup>

A student from Evanston, Charles J. Johnson, played a prominent part in founding Emmaus, a mile or so west of Kedzie, in 1895. This young man was already familiar with Chicago, to which he had come from Norway as a boy of five. He became one of the organizers of the Moreland Epworth League and served as its president for several years. Upon graduating from the theological school in 1896 he went on to complete four years of studies at Northwestern University, during which time he became proficient in oratory. For one oration, on Fridtjof Nansen, he won a gold medal. Emmaus members first rented a store on North and 41st Avenues. A church was dedicated in 1901.<sup>9</sup> Charles J. Johnson later joined an English speaking conference.

Kedzie, itself the product of missionary work, gave rise to Beth-

<sup>7</sup> Hans P. Bergh, *Femtiarsskrift* (Chicago, 1901), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Fiftieth anniversary booklet (1942).

<sup>9</sup> Forty-fifth anniversary booklet (1940).

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any, on North Albany Avenue and Byron Street. The Kedzie pastor, Andrew Hansen, and Hans Ruud held open air meetings in North Avondale in 1895. A Sunday school came into being the following year, and in 1897, when Kedzie folk met with Scandinavians in that neighborhood, the decision was made to buy a lot. Frederick Ring, presiding elder, made organization official in 1898.<sup>10</sup>

Not always could progress be recorded. On the contrary, some smaller congregations struggled vainly to keep alive. The faithful few at Wausau, Wisconsin, found themselves in a peculiar predicament in 1891. The church stood on an island in the river, on rented property, and the rental period had elapsed. When the city decided to build a bridge over the river and to run a street through the church property the congregation engaged the services of a lawyer. So few were the members that no minister was appointed for the next year. The issue was settled when the city paid the damages, but the Norwegian-Danish work at Wausau was soon discontinued. In 1892 a conference committee recommended the sale of the church in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin, and the payment of the remaining debt. Fickle lightning gave the Chicago District special attention in 1902, striking the sanctuaries of Maplewood Avenue, Racine Trinity, and Merrill, Wisconsin. Fortunately, all were covered by insurance. Not so fortunate was the Grand Forks, North Dakota, congregation in 1905, when a violent hail-storm inflicted severe damage. Coming at a time of considerable economic trial, and immediately following the departure of some members for the more promising West, leaving only nine, editor Bergh of the *Talsmand* was moved to make an exceptional appeal on behalf of Grand Forks.<sup>11</sup>

Had more pastors been available, Methodism would have advanced in more distant places. Said Eltzholtz for the new Omaha District in 1892, "Minden, Hampton, St. Paul, and Dannebrog in Nebraska, and Laramie City in Wyoming, should be supplied with preachers." A distant echo of this call was heard in 1903 when

<sup>10</sup> Fiftieth anniversary booklet (1948).

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 23; (1892), 22 and 24; (1902), 17. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, July 6, 1905.

James Sanaker of the Minneapolis District announced that a lay preacher was waiting for help in Denver, Colorado. "Green pastures are before me" was the theme of his remarks.<sup>12</sup>

Many significant ideas and developments belong to the 1890's. The committee on behalf of Sunday observance alerted the conference from time to time on violations of the fourth commandment. Upon its recommendation the conference adopted a resolution urging the commissioners of the Columbian Exposition to keep the world's fair of 1893 closed on Sundays. Pastors were asked to preach at least one sermon annually against "one of the greatest national sins." They should denounce Sunday pleasure traffic. Frowned upon also were unnecessary buying and selling, and riding on streetcars and railroads. In 1904 the conference, in session in Duluth, expressed appreciation to the mayor for his courtesy in securing the removal of a noisy (*støivækkende*) merry-go-round from the vicinity. So Sunday came and went undisturbed.<sup>13</sup>

Not unrelated to Sabbath observance was the temperance movement. Avid in its promotion was Eltzholtz. In 1892 he cited the compliment paid to the Scandinavians by the *Union Signal*, organ of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, to the effect that North Dakota became a prohibition state because of their efforts at the ballot box. The death of Francis Willard in 1898 was noted with deep regret. Eltzholtz suggested temperance demonstrations by children and young people as fitting observances of the Fourth of July. This former temperance leader in Denmark occasionally devoted an entire issue of the *Talsmand* to the cause. Conference temperance committees repeatedly went on record as favoring total abstinence and support of the Anti-Saloon League. In 1911 the committee protested the appearance of James Wilson, secretary of agriculture, as an "honored guest" at the Second International Brewers' Congress in Chicago.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 17 and (1903), 18.

<sup>13</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 14; (1892), 29; (1893), 32; (1894), 30; (1904), 17.

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 17; (1902), 27; (1911), 46. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, February 22 and March 1, 1898; July 5 and August 23, 1900.

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*Talsmand* editors constantly lambasted the liquor traffic after the turn of the century. Eltzholtz visited Denmark in 1904 to participate in the 25th anniversary celebration of the temperance movement, which he had begun. Temperance organizations there claimed 116,000 members, he said. Anton Bast, later bishop of the Scandinavian Area, wrote Hans P. Bergh, substituting for Eltzholtz at home, that Eltzholtz was being enthusiastically applauded by large audiences in his native land. Eltzholtz, he explained, had brought the movement from America to Denmark in 1878. Upon returning to the United States Eltzholtz proceeded to denounce the national government in its coddling of army officers in their request for "canteen saloons" for the avowed purpose of maintaining morale in the military forces.<sup>15</sup>

Editorial successors of Eltzholtz continued the assault upon John Barleycorn. Bergh noted with unconcealed satisfaction that San Francisco authorities forbade even the sale of soda water after the disastrous earthquake and fire of April 6, 1906. Wilhelmsen devoted his entire first number to temperance and announced that one page would be so used in subsequent issues of the paper. He quoted Emperor William II of Germany, addressing a unit of soldiers, to the effect that in the next war victory would come to that nation which consumed the least amount of alcohol. The death of Carrie Nation, she of hatchet fame, drew sympathetic comment. Her direct action was condoned on the grounds that the law frequently protected the law-breaking saloon. Governor Thomas R. Marshall of Indiana drew criticism in the summer of 1912, while he was running as Democratic vice-presidential candidate. The charge was that he had approved a bill legalizing Sunday baseball in his state and that he had also attempted to nullify the county option law with reference to the sale of liquor. In the same issue of the *Talsmand* Woodrow Wilson, Democratic presidential candidate, was accused of straddling the temperance issue. Wilson, it was explained, described the issue as moral rather than political. Much was forgiven, however, when certain members of Wilson's cabinet resolved not to have liquor served at state functions.

<sup>15</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, June 9 and August 4, 1904; June 21, 1906; October 8, 1908.



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Among them was William Jennings Bryan, who in his two years as secretary of state was derided in Washington society as a "grape juice" diplomat.<sup>16</sup>

While evangelism usually took the form of annual revival meetings, the challenge of everyday evangelism was not evaded. In a preachers' meeting of 1898 Oluf A. Wiersen propounded the question of reaching more effectively those Danes and Norwegians who were not church-affiliated. In the ensuing discussion Frederick Ring voiced the belief that the 1880's had brought more progress, there being fewer distractions. Arne Johnsen thereupon questioned the relative ease with which conversion could now take place. "Now one has only to raise a finger to be converted. The next will probably be to baptize one's portrait instead of oneself, and eventually one can probably 'join the church by telephone' (Johnsen spoke in English at this point). If the Spirit does not come with a true revival, it will go with us as with other extinct denominations—we shall die." <sup>17</sup>

Protracted meetings (*forlængede møter*) were usually conducted by the local pastor with the help of a colleague, but traveling evangelists were sometimes called in. Reports of such meetings are numerous and impressive. In general, fruits of the evangelistic efforts were plentiful and satisfying. Many an uncommitted person found his peace and his place during such momentous days and nights, and some provided the leadership in the immigrant church. Of immeasurable spiritual value, particularly to the Chicago constituency, were the summer meetings over a long span of years at Des Plaines Camp Grounds, a Methodist-owned tract of land lying a few miles northwest of the great city.

Yet results of revival meetings were at times considered less than satisfactory. As Eltzholtz expressed it in 1893, if half as much time, money, and prayer were devoted to the regular functions of the church through the resident pastor, the results would be

<sup>16</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, February 16 and June 15, 1911; August 22, 1912; March 13, 1913.

<sup>17</sup> *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Prestemøde* (Cambridge, Wisconsin, 1898). These meetings were held, with some omissions, from 1891 to 1939. There are no minutes for the years 1894, 1901, 1907, 1908, and 1933, since no meetings were held.

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greater. In 1906 H. C. Munson reported that camp meetings had been held in five places on the Red River Valley District during the year, but he threw some doubt upon their effectiveness when he added, "I fear that the old methods employed at these meetings are not as productive as in the past. Emphasis must be placed upon more personal work with the individual soul."<sup>18</sup>

There were times when revivals under non-Methodist auspices interfered with the progress of Norwegian-Danish Methodism, at home and abroad. Speaking for the Minneapolis District in 1911, P. M. Peterson declared that an intensive movement, inspired by the Nebraska Holiness Association, had taken strong hold on both pastors and layfolk in Fremont and Omaha, as well as in Missouri Valley, Iowa. He felt that it had brought "spiritual blessing" but "nothing greater" to many members. On the other hand, Minneapolis First Church suffered from internal dissension because of Pentecostal (*Tungetale*) incursions. There it was found necessary to remove many names from the church rolls. It appears that the holiness and sanctification planks in the early Methodist platform had been adopted more enthusiastically by the above groups. It may also be more than a coincidence that Pentecostal organization in Norway accepted the guidance of a Methodist pastor, Thomas Ball Barratt, who by 1915 chose to leave the Methodist Church. It is quite possible that Barratt's influence was felt among the people cited by Peterson.<sup>19</sup>

Intimate ties of affection among the pastors are impressive. Funeral expenses were sometimes too much for the bereaved to de-

<sup>18</sup> *Protokol for Præstemødet i Omaha Distrikt* (Forest City, Iowa, 1893). The Omaha District minutes, in Norwegian-Danish and in longhand, cover the years from 1891 to 1899. No meeting is recorded for 1894. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1906), 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1911), 32. Nils Bloch-Hoell, *Pinsebevegelsen. En undersøkelse av Pinsebevegelsens tilblivelse, utvikling og særpreg med særlig henblikk på bevegelsens utforming i Norge* (Oslo, 1956), 111 ff. Bloch-Hoell's scholarly work is undoubtedly the best on this topic. Born in England, Barratt grew up in a Wesleyan Methodist home. He married a Norwegian, whose parents belonged to the Lammers free church movement. He served in many Methodist appointments and eventually founded *Pinsevennerne* in 1906, while hoping for Methodist support. His congregation in Christiania (Oslo) adopted the name *Filadelfia*, by which the Pentecostal society in Norway is known today.

fray. In such cases "collections" were taken among the brethren, and the balance from a special fund, *Medhjælpernes Kasse*. Retirements also gave opportunity for expression of deep feelings of gratitude and good will. In 1894 the conference extended its appreciation to O. P. Petersen, then retiring, for his constructive efforts on both sides of the Atlantic. The bishop added some appropriate remarks and presented Petersen with a check in the amount of \$130.00, most generous in hard times. After the hearty singing of two stanzas of "Velsignet er den Aand" (Blest be the tie that binds) Petersen, tears flowing freely, thanked his fellow pastors. Petersen remained in activity until his second retirement in 1898. His many achievements make up a substantial part of these pages. He died on December 20, 1901, in Brooklyn, where he had taken the pastorate of Second Church only in August. Bishop C. G. Andrews spoke at the memorial services. Similar services were held in Racine, as well as in Milwaukee, where his body was laid to rest.<sup>20</sup>

In the Omaha District preachers' meeting of 1895 in Viborg, South Dakota, resolutions of sympathy were read to commemorate the deaths of two of the younger pastors in point of service, Wilhelm Rasmussen and A. C. Petersen. The congregation then arose and sang "O, tænk hvilket Land over der" (Oh, think of the home over there). Born in Denmark in 1864, Rasmussen was converted in California. Bishop Taylor's appeal for missionaries to the Congo attracted him. In Africa he served intermittently from 1887 to 1895 and died there, having twice left the field on grounds of failing health. During his second absence he was pastor of the Norwegian-Danish flock in Des Moines, Iowa. The other young man, Petersen, first served in the Swedish conference. Also of Danish birth, 1858, he was active on the Omaha District in his last years.<sup>21</sup>

Funeral services for better known personalities could be close to festive, yet mournful. Such a service in 1896 did more than

<sup>20</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 11; (1894), 15; (1902), 18 and 38-41.

<sup>21</sup> *Protokol for Præstemødet i Omaha Distrikt* (1895). Rasmussen's widow, the former Helen Chapman, married Bishop Springer (C. W. Schevenius to Arlow W. Andersen, March 5, 1955).

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most to elicit praise for the deceased and to cement spiritual ties among the parishioners, as well as among the Chicago community of Norwegiandom and Methodists of the entire conference. A great man in Israel had fallen. According to the account in the Chicago *Skandinaven*, John H. Johnson, distinguished pastor of "den første Methodist Episcopal Norwegian Church," died suddenly on October 8 just as he was preparing to take a new appointment in Minnesota. Funeral services were conducted in his church on Sunday, October 10. His longtime friend and associate, O. P. Petersen, conducted a preliminary service of scripture reading and prayer. Half an hour before the main service was to begin, people were standing in the stairways and out on the sidewalk. Police were on hand to preserve order if necessary. Frederick Ring, presiding elder, gave the sermon in Norwegian. Nels E. Simonsen, head of the Evanston seminary, spoke in English of the life of the deceased. The veteran Andrew Haagensen presented an obituary message. Mourners filed by the casket for an hour. The body was taken to its final resting place, Richland, Wisconsin, where Johnson had once served and where he had met Anne Frydenlund, who was to be his wife. So ended the earthly pilgrimage of a soldier of the Grand Army of the Republic, and a soldier of the cross. Few commanded as great respect and as loyal a following. Testifying to his qualities, fellow pastors had three times elected him as their delegate to the General Conference.<sup>22</sup>

Pastors' salaries continued to be short of adequate. In 1907, a depression year, James Sanaker complained that low salaries made some appointments difficult on the Minneapolis District. He added seriously, "It seems that our conference needs to go back to the old rule that our preachers, or a certain percentage of them, remain single or at least delay marrying until they have been in the pastorate a certain number of years."<sup>23</sup>

Yet layfolk were giving generously, both to their own churches and to missions. In 1899 John A. Jacobsen explained that the

<sup>22</sup> *Skandinaven*, October 14, 1896. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1897), 35. Johnson was elected to the General Conference in 1880, 1888 (representing the Norway Conference), and 1892.

<sup>23</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1907), 27.



Board of Home Missions and Church Extension reported that the Red River Valley District had raised its largest missionary offering, amounting to \$1.35 per member for the year. The district ranked 10th among 505 districts in Methodism. L. A. Larson reported in 1903 that the Chicago District had been self-supporting for the first time, which was to say that the presiding elder had been sustained by the congregations, without the use of mission funds.<sup>24</sup>

Before the turn of the century, when Norwegian-Danish Methodism was approaching maximum strength, a number of voices were advocating a division of the conference. In 1895 Nels E. Simonsen spoke on the grounds favoring division. M. L. Kjelstad and L. A. Larson presented the matter pro and con at a Chicago District preachers' meeting. Presiding elder Rasmus Wilhelmsen dealt with the question in an Omaha District preachers' meeting. He suggested as a dividing line the Mississippi River. Of the same order was a proposal of Eltzholtz for a Chicago Conference and a St. Paul Conference. The theological seminary would remain in Evanston, in the Chicago Conference while the offices of the *Talsmand* and the bookstore would be moved to St. Paul. Citing the fact that Swedish Methodists in America had divided their conference, he emphasized two disadvantages of the prevailing organization: (1) few congregations were able to entertain the annual meeting, because of its magnitude, and (2) the territory was too extended for efficient administration. Division, he thought, might stimulate greater activity.<sup>25</sup>

Another reason for dividing the conference was suggested by H. P. Nelsen. Lay delegates, hitherto meeting quadrennially, might soon be meeting annually. With two smaller conferences traveling expenses would be reduced and each congregation would feel more inclined to finance the expenditures of a lay representative. Moreover, in the General Conference the Norwegian-Danish representation would be doubled. In 1902 a conference committee revived

<sup>24</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1899), 24 and (1903), 17.

<sup>25</sup> *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Præstemøde* (Chicago Immanuel, 1895, and Chicago Moreland, 1897). *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 22, 1897. *Pro.okol for Præstemødet i Omaha Distrikt* (Fremont, Nebraska, 1897). *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1901), 7.

the proposal of Wilhelmsen when it proposed as the dividing line the Mississippi River, the St. Croix River, and the Wisconsin-Minnesota boundary. But adoption was not forthcoming.<sup>26</sup>

In 1905 Eltzholtz again raised the question of reorganization, expressing the belief that the 25th anniversary of the conference would be ideal for the creation of two conferences. In the same issue of the *Talsmand* M. L. Kjelstad called attention to the probability of securing more financial aid for missionary work if there were two conferences in the Middle West. At that time the Norwegian-Danish Conference had not surrendered the Far West. Not until 1907, when seeking articles of incorporation, did the mid-westerners finally agree upon the Alleghanies and the Rockies as the boundary.<sup>27</sup>

The years 1901 and 1905 were duly observed with anniversary celebrations. At a meeting in Cambridge in June, 1901, commemorating fifty years of progress for the first organized congregation, Eltzholtz read an account of the beginnings. On Sunday morning the two sole survivors of 1851, Ole Larsen and Bendix Ingebrigtsen, were honored. The veteran O. P. Petersen preached with fervor on a favorite "If any man thirst" theme (John 7:37-38).<sup>28</sup>

Celebration continued in St. Paul, at the annual conference session. Wilhelmsen delivered a Friday afternoon lecture on "The triumphant progress of the Christian Church in the nineteenth century." Haagensen preached on Sunday morning. On Sunday evening Eltzholtz gave an address on "The founders of Norwegian-Danish Methodism and its beginning." Bishop C. H. Fowler read the appointments on Monday morning. Ole Jacobsen spoke at a jubilee festival on Monday evening to bring the celebration to a close.<sup>29</sup>

The annual conference session of 1905, meeting in Minneapolis,

<sup>26</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 30, 1900. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1902), 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, July 6, 1905. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1907), 37.

<sup>28</sup> Hans P. Bergh, *Femtiaarsskrift udgivet i anledning af den Norsk-danske Methodismes Femtiaarsjubilaum*, 63-64.

<sup>29</sup> Bergh, 66.

included a 25th anniversary observance of the organization of the conference. There Eltzholtz and L. A. Larson traced the historical development once again, while Asle Knudsen and Ole Jacobsen compared conditions of the past with those of the present. Of special concern that year was the political crisis attendant upon Norway's decision to withdraw from the union with Sweden. A conference resolution was sped on its way after a unanimous rising vote of acceptance. It expressed loyalty to the Norwegian position but also the hope that peace would be preserved and that "brother lands" would suffer no disadvantage from Norway's separation.<sup>30</sup>

Sunday school enrollment kept pace with the general growth. Yearbook statistics indicate a strength of 1,902 pupils in 1880, and 5,637 pupils in 1914, the peak year. In the same interval the number of schools rose from 45 to 80. But the rise came in spite of the language question (*Sprogspørsmålet*), which affected the younger generation before it became acute on the adult level. Already in 1891, papers were read at the Chicago District preachers' meeting on the advisability of employing both Norwegian and English in the Sunday schools, the consensus of opinion being that the Norwegian-Danish (*Riksmåal*) should be used as much as possible. In 1893 Eltzholtz called attention to the necessity of using two languages for the children. Similarly, Frederick Ring urged that parents be encouraged to support the use of the foreign tongue in Sunday schools and Epworth Leagues in order that "our little branch of worldwide Methodism might be insured for the coming generation." Eltzholtz raised a peculiar but practical question when, in 1912, he cautioned against forsaking Danish-rooted *Riksmåal* for *Landsmaal*, the composite rural language of Norway to which some patriotic Norwegians were turning. Himself a Dane, he feared that *Landsmaal* would impair cordial relations between Norway and Denmark. The contest between proponents of *Riksmåal* (now *Bokmål*) and *Landsmaal* (now *Nynorsk*) is even sharper in Norway today.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 21, 1905. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1905), 20.

<sup>31</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1880), 36; (1893), 20; (1895), 16; (1914), 57. *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Prestemøde* (Milwaukee, 1891). *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, May 16, 1912.

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For Norwegians in America, however, the ultimate choice lay between English and the language of the immigrants. Some, like James Sanaker, attempted to solve the dilemma by compromise. Somewhat later Sanaker was proposing modifications in evangelistic approach as well, his emphasis being upon instruction in the Christian way of life and a wider use of English.<sup>32</sup>

Paralleling the growth of the church and the Sunday school was the rise of the Epworth League, the official young peoples' society. Youth organizations under various names throughout the American Methodist Church merged into the Epworth League in 1889. They were recognized by the General Conference of 1892. Norwegian-Danish presiding elders began to make mention of the infant society as early as 1891. Chicago District preachers were also discussing the organization, aims, and possible benefits of the Epworth League. Editor Treider gave space to the purpose of the League in an anonymous statement in English, which defined it as a society "for clean sociability, for filling empty pews in church, for spiritual uplift, for the development of the mind, for promoting temperance, for permissible amusements, for promoting the missionary spirit, for supporting the class meeting, for stimulating prayer meetings, for introducing a big army of Christian optimists, but above all for personal religious growth and for the conversion of sinners." It was hoped, not least in ministerial circles, that the League would serve as "an entrance into the Temple," not as "a church within the church."<sup>33</sup>

A committee of pastors reported in the annual session of 1892 in favor of organizing local chapters wherever possible and publishing a paper for church youth. They also suggested the election of a conference Epworth League secretary to whom local chapters might turn for advice and through whom correspondence with Epworth League headquarters might be channeled. Junior Epworth Leagues should be formed in order that Sunday school children might be saved for the church.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1907), 26 and (1913), 30.

<sup>33</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 17 and 19. *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Prestemøde* (Milwaukee, 1891, and Racine, 1892). *Den Christelige Talsmand*, December 16, 1890. Haagensen, *Historie*, 140.

<sup>34</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 27.



According to Frederick Ring, the district Epworth League organization had its inception at a ministers' meeting in Chicago First Church in 1896. Yet, reports of a fourth annual convention at Chicago Parkside Church in 1898 would suggest that the first had been held in 1895. Fourteen leagues, or chapters, were represented in the convention of 1898. Some were already active in foreign missions. In 1896 Eltzholtz recognized Forest City, Iowa, as having the strongest chapter in the Omaha District and stated that they had supported a missionary in India for two years. At that time his own sister, representing Methodists in Denmark, had completed four years as a medical missionary in India, at great risk to her health.<sup>35</sup>

Annual conventions called for planning, and offered opportunity for expression. According to an announcement in the *Talsmand* in June, 1900, Charles Johnson of Kenosha, Wisconsin, would preside at the Chicago District convention in July in the Maplewood Avenue Church, Chicago. The convention would open with the customary Friday evening reception, not forgetting addresses of welcome by the local pastor and the presiding elder. It would close on Sunday afternoon with a program that included a discussion of how young men could best be reached and won for God and the church, and another on how to obtain good results from prayer meetings, all in the Norwegian-Danish language.<sup>36</sup>

From the district secretary's minutes of 1904 it is learned that the convention of that year was held in Stoughton, Wisconsin, in Dane County, the mecca of many a Norwegian or Danish immigrant in times past. The Chicago and Milwaukee Railroad provided a private car for delegates from Chicago. They arrived in Stoughton at 7:45 p.m. to be met at the station by a reception committee. Then they marched through the town singing until

<sup>35</sup> Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser*, 40. *Den Christelige Talsmand*, July 5, 1898, and February 22, 1900. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1896), 19. Apparently the first woman missionary to be appointed from Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America was Louise Stixrud, who is reported as being on her way in 1906 to a station in Dagupan in the Philippine Islands. See *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, November 15, 1906.

<sup>36</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, June 14, 1900.

they reached the church, which was beautifully decorated for the occasion.<sup>37</sup>

Linguistic transition is reflected in 1906-07 in the *Talsmand* sections devoted to Epworth League reports and articles. In 1906 appeared the first reports in English of Chicago District officers to the annual convention. In 1907 the Epworth League page was published in English for the first time. In the convention of 1909 Thor H. Loberg, long an outstanding layman in the conference, appealed to the delegates for *Talsmand* subscriptions. By 1912 the Chicago District Epworth League was requesting a regular section of the *Talsmand* in English.<sup>38</sup>

For the failure of youth to participate wholeheartedly in services of worship the continued use of the European tongue was partly to blame. Prominent Norwegians in America foresaw in *Sprogspørsmålet* the impending crisis for immigrant institutions. Editor Knud Langeland of the Chicago *Skandinaven* regretted in the 1870's that "many of the older settlers read only English-language newspapers, while a good many of those who have grown up in this country do not even understand Norwegian." In 1898 Professor Thronnd Bothne of Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, declared, "Now the question no longer is: How shall we learn English so that we may take part in the social life of America and partake of her benefits? The big question is, how can we preserve the language of our ancestors here, in a strange environment, and pass on to our descendants the treasures which it contains?"<sup>39</sup>

While the problem of speech first made its unwanted appearance in the Sunday schools and Epworth Leagues, it was not long in reaching the adult level in full force. As early as 1896 the Chicago District preachers coped with it.<sup>40</sup> In their annual meet-

<sup>37</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, October 27, 1904.

<sup>38</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 6 and 13, 1906; May 9, 1907; October 7, 1909. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1912), 13.

<sup>39</sup> *Skandinaven*, December 20, 1871. Einar Haugen, *The Norwegian Language in America*, volume 1, pages 233 and 245. Especially useful in this connection is Haugen's chapter 10, entitled "The Struggle over Norwegian." Published in 1953, this scholarly work in two volumes carries the sub-title *A Study in Bilingual Behavior*.

<sup>40</sup> *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Prestemøde* (Racine Trinity, 1896).

ing Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen presented his views on the theme, "Does our missionary work demand more or less preaching in English?" He believed that it would be well to continue the Norwegian-Danish exclusively only in places where the immigrant influx warranted it. To his address there were various replies. Arne Johnsen pointed out the need for younger preachers trained in both languages. Oluf A. Wiersen resigned himself to the prospect that the transition to English must come. But Haagensen was of a different opinion: "The church stands as historical proof that it is possible even for a smaller denomination to retain its mother tongue. We must work to preserve our language." Finally, a resolution was adopted to the effect that the ministers pledge themselves to do everything within their power to revive interest in the mother tongue.

Increasingly the language issue projected itself into discussions and reports. In 1902 John A. Jacobsen, representing the Red River Valley District, made note of a request for a bilingual pastor and advised an attempt to reconcile "apparently contradictory desires." The annual conference of 1907 adopted a resolution recommending that Preaching in English should not be introduced in a congregation without approval of the quarterly conference and the presiding elder.<sup>41</sup>

By 1914 the Norwegian-Danish was compelled to yield in part to the English, even before the wartime discouragement of the use of European languages in the United States. From James Sanaker's report of that year for the Red River Valley District, for example, it is learned that two languages were found to be necessary in Sunday school work. Language, said Sanaker, should be merely a means to an end. English was used chiefly in some congregations, and at the request of the official board Hans A. Ofstie of Duluth First Church, long a Norwegian stronghold, had begun to preach in English once a month. In *Sprogspørsmålet* the question mark was being crowded by the exclamation point.<sup>42</sup>

Concurrent with the thorny issue of language were other prob-

<sup>41</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1902), 21 and (1907), 15.

<sup>42</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1914), 29.

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lems. One of these relates to the status of women in the councils of the church. In the early 1890's Methodist congregations throughout the land were being canvassed on whether women should be permitted to sit as delegates in the quadrennial General Conference, the law-making body of the church. In 1891 the Norwegian-Danish Conference decided against women's eligibility by a vote of 27 to 11. Five years later the tally on the same question was 30 to 13, women again being rejected as delegates.<sup>43</sup>

The general feeling of Norwegian-Danish pastors on *Kvinde-spørsmålet*, the question of woman's place in society, was perhaps reflected in *Talsmand* statements by Haagensen and O. P. Petersen. "That women have a right to throw themselves into political, religious, and social life no one would deny," said Haagensen, "but whether it is the will of God is another matter. . . . We have altogether too few homes and altogether too many divorces." Siding with Haagensen, Petersen invoked scripture to the effect that women should subordinate themselves to their husbands. He ridiculed the assumption that the fair sex were enslaved by men. "Marriage pressure works both ways," he declared. "Many a man wishes that he could be released from an unfortunate marriage." <sup>44</sup>

Representing the minority on the women's question was Oluf Wiersen, who expounded the view that unmarried women, like Frances Willard, might be divinely called to great missions. But wives, he believed, should remain obedient to their husbands. "I suppose," he ventured, "that Queen Victoria was subservient to her husband (Prince Albert) while he lived, although she reigned." That women were beginning to be held in higher esteem is shown in two letters from the Dakotas. A layman from Danville, South Dakota, where the "vote on the women" gave favorable results for the women, philosophized, "It is so natural for us fallen people to say no, especially when one believes that scripture is on one's side." Another layman, from Hillsboro, North Dakota, expressed the hope that women's individuality would be

<sup>43</sup> Haagensen, 138. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 9 and (1896), 9.

<sup>44</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, November 4, 1890, and March 17, 1891.



"recognized in State and Church as it is in the order of Nature and Grace." <sup>45</sup>

The question of lay representation in the General Conference also occupied the minds of church leaders. It first came to official notice in a resolution of the Philadelphia Conference favoring equal clerical and lay participation, and a single assembly for pastoral and lay delegates. The Norwegian-Danish Conference rejected the resolution by a vote of 24 to 9. Eight years later came a reversal, with 32 in favor and only 5 opposed to lay representation. While no reason for this drastic turn in ministerial opinion can be given with certainty, it is at least possible to conjecture that the softening effects of suffering through the economic depression of the 1890's, the attitudes of new members of the conference, and the incumbency of the White House by a Methodist layman, William McKinley, all contributed toward a fresh appreciation of the role of laymen in the church.<sup>46</sup>

A persistent problem, which baffled the efforts of Methodist proselyters, was the rock-like loyalty of Lutheran-indoctrinated folk to the church of their childhood. As Ole Jacobsen explained the matter, "As a people we have one of the hardest elements to work among. They are grounded in prejudice and intolerance, and they consider it a gross sin to support the Methodists." Asle Knudsen confirmed Jacobsen's estimate when he said, "Great prejudice and opposition confront us from a Norwegian-Danish people who come from a state church in which dead form prevails more than living religion."<sup>47</sup>

The issue of Methodism versus Lutheranism came alive in the polemical writings of Haagensen and O. P. Petersen. Haagensen's treatise on similarities and differences came to the attention of the annual conference session of 1892. The brethren made provision for its publication, in condensed form, as a tract. The fol-

<sup>45</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, November 18 and December 16, 1890, and February 3, 1891. Wiersen's four daughters won distinction as excellent lifetime teachers in the Chicago public schools. They were continuously active in the Moreland (now Asbury) Church.

<sup>46</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 11; (1896), 9; (1899), 14.

<sup>47</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 23 and (1893), 22.

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lowing year the pastors urged O. P. Petersen to write on the principal teachings of the two denominations.<sup>48</sup>

Many a tall tree fell in the period before 1914. The deaths of John H. Johnson and O. P. Petersen have been cited. Karl Schou had died earlier in Denmark, in 1889, less than fifty years old but having progressed from watchmaker, Civil War soldier, and inventor of a surveying device to seminary teacher and superintendent of the Danish mission.<sup>49</sup> The conference suffered further losses in the passing of Nils Christophersen and Ole Heland in 1892, Wiersen in 1904, Ole Jacobsen, L. A. Larson, and Carl H. Josephson in 1908, and Haagensen in 1911. Fortunately, Asle Knudsen's retirement in 1910 did not mean the end of his ministry. He served as financial agent of the Preachers' Aid Society from its organization in 1896 to 1918, and as treasurer from the beginning until 1930.<sup>50</sup>

Haagensen's retirement closed a long and full chapter. His many achievements as pastor, editor, hymn writer, and historian mark him as one of the greatest personalities of the immigrant church. Not the least of his accomplishments was *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider Havet*, published in Chicago in 1894. In 1907 he celebrated fifty years of service in the ministry. On the conference floor in 1908 he requested the retired relation, to which his fellow pastors responded dramatically by a standing vote of appreciation for his many contributions.<sup>51</sup>

Necessary to the completion of the story of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America are a few well-deserved words concerning its institutions: the Theological School in Evanston, the Deaconess and Women's Home in Chicago, and the Elim Old Peoples' Home in Minneapolis. Festive and stimulating were the dedication ceremonies of the Theological School on May 7, 1890. Commencement exercises lent further color. Those in attendance were in-

<sup>48</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 12 and (1893), 13.

<sup>49</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1889), 31.

<sup>50</sup> *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, page 68. The purpose of the society, composed of all conference members, was to solicit funds for the benefit of superannuated ministers and their families.

<sup>51</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 26, 1907, and January 12, 1911. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1908), 35-37.

vited to pledge their loyalty in the form of a subscription. Results were gratifying, a total of \$2,300 being raised, mostly from among the preachers. Haagensen was designated as the official agent, until 1893, when presiding elders shouldered the responsibility for collecting funds in their respective districts.<sup>52</sup>

In 1891 the conference approved "The Norwegian-Danish Theological School" as the official name. So bright was the outlook for some, with both feet in heaven, that the more practical-minded found it advisable to curb enthusiasm. A committee of 1892, for example, cautioned against establishing a proposed high school, knowing that the financial demands of the seminary were quite enough. Others felt that applicants for the theological school should be more carefully screened. Chicago District preachers pointed to quarterly conference recommendations of poorly qualified men. Results in some cases, said they, had been disastrous. They recommended that a candidate in the future should have at least a local preacher's license. A few years later Frederick Ring addressed himself to the same problem, emphasizing handicaps of physical weakness, advanced age, and family responsibilities. On the credit side of the ledger, however, it should be stated that the founding of a permanent institution for the study of theology and for the preparation of ministers was a notable achievement in itself.<sup>53</sup>

Acceptance on trial in the conference did not require seminary preparation, but familiarity was expected with such works as Hofgaard's *Grammar*, Horn's *Geography*, Eriksen's *History of the North*, Bennett's *History of Methodism*, Wesley's *Sermons*, Hawley's *Handbook of Methodism*, and of course the *Catechism* and the *Discipline* of the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>54</sup>

For the theological school a suitable course of studies was formulated. During a four-year program, courses were taught in Norwegian grammar, penmanship, reading, speech, Scandinavian

<sup>52</sup> Haagensen, *Historie*, 124, 128, and 152.

<sup>53</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1891), 12 and (1892), 28. *Forhandlings Protokol for Chicago Distrikts Prestemøde* (1892). *Den Christelige Talsmand*, March 29, 1900.

<sup>54</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1895), 22.

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and English literature, world history, logic, geography, theology, ethics, homiletics, and the Bible. More specifically, studies of the fourth year included Merrill's *Den Christelige Erfaring* (The Christian Experience), Hans L. Martensen's *Den Christelige Ethik*, R. Nielsen's *Sjæle og Tænkelse* (Doctrine of the Soul and Mind), Schoyen's *Amerikas Historie*, and Abel Stevens' *History of Methodism*. While only one fourth-year textbook was published in English, others in English were read in the preceding years. Works in Norwegian and Danish were to be studied, those in English to be read.<sup>55</sup>

The inclusion of Martensen's *Den Christelige Ethik* is of more than passing interest. It was in the discussion of the chapter on "Socialism and Individualism" that Professor Simonsen introduced his students to the ideas and the personality of the Danish philosopher, Søren Kierkegaard.<sup>56</sup> While Simonsen may have concerned himself mainly with Martensen, the views of his fellow countryman Kierkegaard were nevertheless brought to light in the seminary soon after Simonsen's arrival from Norway in 1885. Simonsen had been studying literature and languages in the Universities of Christiania (Oslo) and Copenhagen and was well able to cite and interpret Kierkegaard both in the study of Christian ethics and the treatment of Northern literature. Kierkegaard's ideas were cited and his works, in elegant poetic prose, were available on the seminary shelves to the more ambitious and curious. It appears also that Simonsen regarded certain aspects of Kierkegaard's philosophy sympathetically, long before "existentialism" became prominent in the United States.<sup>57</sup> The study of Kierkegaard was continued in greater detail during the classes in Norwegian-Danish literature by Schevenius and others. American

<sup>55</sup> Hans P. Bergh, *Femtiaarsskrift*, 60-61. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1895), 22; report of the conference committee on the course of study.

<sup>56</sup> "Guds Rige og den Enkelte. Socialisme og Individualisme" (The kingdom of God and the individual. Socialism and individualism), in *Den Christelige Ethik, Almindelige Del* (General section), Copenhagen, 1884, 275-300.

<sup>57</sup> For a fuller discussion of this theme see Howard A. Slaatte, "Kierkegaard's Introduction to American Methodists, a Tribute," in *The Drew Gateway* (Drew University School of Theology, Madison, New Jersey), volume 30, number 3 (Spring,



theologians do not seem to have been generally aware of Søren Kierkegaard until about 1930.<sup>58</sup>

That the school was thriving in the 1890's there can be no doubt. Led by Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen, the students published a monthly, *Studenten*, the announced purpose of which was "to disseminate information about school life in Evanston, to establish a more intimate relationship between the students and the Norwegian and Danish people, and to be a help and a witness for our kitchen." Recipient of many a can of vegetables or jar of preserves, the kitchen softened the hearts of hundreds of givers in years to come. Trustees reported in 1893 that 25 students were enrolled and that 37 congregations had contributed to the Christmas offering, an annual source of income. Twenty-eight congregations had not responded, which is quite understandable in view of lack of good communications and effective publicity and, not least, to desperate financial circumstances in America. Student Wilhelmsen himself appeared before the Omaha District preachers in 1892 on behalf of the school. In his remarks he stated that among the 24 students were 11 Norwegians, 11 Danes, and 2 Swedes. This would seem to have been the high point of Danish representation.<sup>59</sup>

1960), 161-167. Professor Slaatte's interest in this subject was first quickened by a remark by his father, Iver T. Slaatte, a graduate of the Norwegian-Danish Theological School, to the effect that his attention was first drawn to Kierkegaard in that institution. Howard Slaatte then wrote the writer, and together we explored a bit further by sounding out several alumni, among them P. M. Peterson, Halvard Folkestad, and Carl W. Schevenius. Schevenius has become recognized as a Kierkegaard authority.

<sup>58</sup> A bit of evidence that Kierkegaard was not unknown to Norwegian-Danish Methodists on the West Coast comes from a random quotation in *Vidnesbyrdet* (November 15, 1890). Taken from Kierkegaard's journal of 1841, it reads in translation: "And when God wishes to bind a man he calls his most faithful servant, his most trustworthy messenger, and it is sorrow, and says to him, 'Hasten after him, overtake him, do not leave his side,' . . . and no woman can attach herself more closely to the man she loves than sorrow." Volume 2 of *Vidnesbyrdet*, from which these lines are taken, is in possession of Martin T. Larson, pastor of First Methodist Church, Lind, Washington. It appears to be the only bound volume of *Vidnesbyrdet* available.

<sup>59</sup> *Studenten*, October 31, 1892. This publication of eight small pages apparently began with the last Monday in October, 1891. First under an editorial committee, the editorship was assumed by Wilhelmsen in October, 1892, and by P. E. Peterson

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The seminary continued with a small faculty, as far as Norwegian personnel were concerned. Hans P. Bergh assisted Simonsen for a year, 1891-92. Tobias Foss and John O. Hall gave of their talents in the years 1909-11, when Foss relieved Simonsen, who was forced to withdraw temporarily for personal reasons. Carl W. Schevenius assisted for four years, 1911-15.<sup>60</sup>

Important in providing academic excellence and a richer curriculum for the Norwegian-Danish seminary were Garrett Biblical Institute and Northwestern University, two outstanding Methodist institutions. An intimate relationship can be traced back to the very beginning, in the 1880's. In 1910 thirteen professors and instructors, all from Garrett except Foss and Hall, conducted courses in which the Scandinavian students were enrolled. The seminary was designated as the Norwegian-Danish department of Garrett, and Garrett's president signed the diplomas of its graduates. Without the school in Evanston the ministerial shortage would have suffered further aggravation, to the point of hopelessness for expansion. The 45 graduates in the first score of years, to 1905, contributed invaluable toward the spread of Methodism among the immigrants and their children in America and to no small extent in Norway and Denmark.<sup>61</sup>

As early as 1892 a committee composed of certain Chicago pastors and laymen was authorized to explore the feasibility of beginning deaconess work. The committee proceeded to appoint Dina Mellum to visit the sick and the poor. As proof of their interest in extending deaconess services to other cities the original committee presented a new list of names in 1893. On the new committee were pastors, laymen, and laywomen from more distant

(Not P. M.) after October, 1893. The last issue may have been dated July 2, 1894, when Peterson stated that times were bad.

Haagensen, 150. *Protokol for Præstemoedet i Omaha Distrikt* (1892).

<sup>60</sup> *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference*; historical section, p. 65.

<sup>61</sup> Horace G. Smith, president emeritus of Garrett Biblical Institute, to Arlow W. Andersen, October 21, 1957. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 8, 1910. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1905), 30. T. Otmann Firing, "The Norwegian-Danish Theological Seminary," in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, 64-66. Professor Simonsen received the honorary degree of doctor of divinity (D.D.) from Garrett in 1895.

places. Representing the women's contingent of the committee were Jennie Shelborn of Forest City, Elvina Petersen of Minneapolis, and Ida J. Olsen of Racine.<sup>62</sup>

The noble conception of the 1890's came to full realization only after the passing of nearly a score of years. In 1909 Chicago District preachers revived the idea of deaconess appointments in each district, but it was largely through the persistence of Frederick Ring, named city missionary, that the foundation was laid for permanent deaconess work in Chicago. Ring visited the sick and the dying while wearing a hat that resembled that of a policeman and carrying a flashlight at night. Dangers there were, but Ring carried no revolver. Few knew Chicago from the seamy side better than he. Eventually he found two recent graduates of the Chicago Training School, Emma Linderud and Sophie Heliksen. Both were well qualified by training, and eager to put their talents to use. In fact, there is reason to believe that Miss Linderud, a superb administrator, assumed the initiative at this point, with Miss Heliksen assisting and with Pastor Ring lending his usual warm support. At the conference session of 1910 the two deaconesses were ordained, and on October 20 of that year they rented a four-room flat on Noble Street. Petra Olausen, quiet and motherly, joined the staff for lifelong service in 1911. Permanent locations there were none. For two months in 1911 the deaconesses occupied a flat on Cortland Street. Slightly less temporary (1911-17) was another flat on north Sawyer Avenue. It is said that the first residents of the women's home, which was always associated with the deaconess function, were two young nurses from Denmark, Maren Bording and Alfrida Kostrup. Their preparation for the foreign missionary field completed, they departed for far-off Korea, when that country was scarcely known to Americans. Furloughs always brought them back to the Deaconess and Woman's Home.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1892), 10 and (1893), 15 and 30.

<sup>63</sup> Thorvald M. Hauge in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, March 16, 1911. Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser* (Journeys and Experiences), 45. Borghild Halvorsen, "Brief history of the Home," in the silver anniversary booklet, 1955. "History of the Deaconess and Woman's Home," in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, 71-72.

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Over the first board of directors presided Thorvald M. Hauge, a staunch pastor. Serving with him were Alma C. Dahl as vice-president, Mrs. O. (Vollie) Torgersen as treasurer, and Ole Nielsen, another pastor, as secretary. From 1913 to 1930 Thor H. Loberg, a congenial and astute business executive, occupied the office of president of the board with much distinction. In 1917 Carl W. Schevenius, superintendent of the Chicago District, aided greatly in securing additional funds and in completing the transaction which resulted in the purchase of a permanent lot at 1856 North Sawyer Avenue.

The Norwegian-Danish Conference also established a home for the aged. While there is reference to trustees as early as 1903, Chicago District preachers took a more significant step in their annual meeting of 1913. Their resolution, pointing toward a home to be built in Chicago, was aired in the annual conference session of the same year. A committee of fifteen, headed by L. C. Knudsen, recommended to the satisfaction of the annual conference Minneapolis or St. Paul as the location. Their choice of the name "Elim" was also approved. Elected to serve temporarily as a board of trustees were, among others, James Sanaker, E. T. Schollert, John A. Jacobsen, and L. C. Knudsen. Aase Knudsen, retired since 1910, was elected financial agent. After several committee meetings and with the help of the district superintendents some \$14,475 was raised by subscription. John A. Jacobsen negotiated successfully for the purchase of a large house on 14th Avenue South in Minneapolis. Elim Home opened its doors on August 20, 1914, free of indebtedness and prepared to accommodate as many residents as the two and one-half story structure with its 14 rooms would bear. By 1916 there were 11 residents, and Gyda Solem, whose self-sacrificing work and kind personality proved invaluable, was engaged as matron.<sup>64</sup>

Through the founding of the Deaconess and Woman's Home

<sup>64</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1903), 26; (1914), 38; (1916), 45. The original trustees of 1903 were L. A. Larsen, Asle Knudsen, O. H. Wilson, Ole Jacobsen, and Frederick Ring. Mrs. A. W. Hansen, "Historical Sketch of Elim Old Peoples' Home," in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, 69-71.



and the Elim Home the Norwegian-Danish Conference became engaged in a permanent ministry to the sick and the poor, to women in need of a homelike Christian environment, and to older folk requiring care and comfort. Beyond 1914 other hands and hearts would come to the aid of the founders.

Prior to 1914 the Norwegian-Danish Methodist tie with the old country was something almost tangible. Nor was it simply a matter related to the Methodist movement in Norway and Denmark. It was grounded, rather, in national sentiment. The affinity with affairs pertaining to the homeland may be illustrated in the response to an invitation of 1914 to participate in the centennial exposition in Norway, commemorating the establishment of an independent constitutional monarchy at Eidsvoll. Hans P. Bergh sent some 250 photographs for a display on *Det Udflyttede Norge* (The Emigrated Norway), including pictures of churches, parsonages, pastors, the seminary in Evanston, the deaconess home, and groups of Sunday school pupils, Epworth Leaguers, ladies' aid members, and choirs. Carl Wernes, president of *Nordmanns-Forbundet* (The League of Norsemen) and Wilhelm Morgenstierne, Norwegian ambassador to the United States, expressed their gratitude for the cooperation.<sup>65</sup>

Bergh's photographic demonstration of institutional advance calls to mind Einar Haugen's analysis of the pre-war period for Norwegians in America. Says Haugen, "The quarter century from 1890 to 1915 was a period when Norwegian activity was slowly dying out at the root, but nevertheless shot higher and finer blossoms than at any earlier period in its history. The flowering of social and cultural Norwegianism of these years gave to some people an illusion of permanence, but it bore the seeds of its own dissolution."<sup>66</sup>

The status of Midwestern Norwegian-Danish Methodism in 1914, practically the end of the era of free immigration, is doubtless subject to more than a single interpretation. Total member-

<sup>65</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, December 10, 1914. The appreciation came by letter, dated November 13, and addressed to N. E. Simonsen.

<sup>66</sup> Einar Haugen, *The Norwegian Language in America*, volume 1, p. 247.

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ship, approximately 5,000, was the same as in 1906, the peak year. Since 1906 the number of congregations had declined slightly, from 99 to 95. Not all was encouraging from the statistical viewpoint. And sometimes regress followed progress. Occasionally a pastor or layman returned to the scene of former triumphs and yielded to momentary despondency, as in the experience of Hans K. Madsen in 1914: <sup>67</sup>

Last spring I visited Ashippun, Wisconsin, to see how matters stood with the old church building, unused for 20 years because our people have moved away. It is in a deplorable condition. In the churchyard were the gravestones under which our old members rest. My thoughts went back to the time when this congregation was in its prime, when our evangelical hymns were sung, and our preachers sounded the trumpet of evangelism. Now everything was still. I became despondent and thought, "This is the future of our Norwegian-Danish work!" But then another vision came: the congregation in Ashippun is not dead. It survives and is carrying out a greater work. Many of the children and grandchildren of the old members are members of the American Methodist church of Oconomowoc, the nearest city, and elsewhere. Pastor Sanaker's wife, who for many years has accomplished a faithful work in our church, was converted here, and brother N. E. Simonsen, who has been professor at our seminary for 30 years, and has prepared a host of young men for the preaching ministry, was also converted in this church. The congregation still lives!

In an eventful career, more striking than that of most of his ministerial associates, Hans K. Madsen demonstrates the growth and maturation of the Norwegian-Danish Conference. His was one of the newer voices to take the place of the stalwarts of the 1890's. As one who arrived in America in 1900, on the threshold of the twentieth century, he was not one to do things in a small way. Already in the Norway Conference, from which he was transferred, he had shown himself to be a man of action and of pulpit eloquence. One of the ablest Norwegian-speaking orators in America, he spoke, with others, at Como Park, St. Paul, in 1905 on the occasion of the celebration of Norway's complete separa-

<sup>67</sup> *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1914)*, 18.

tion from Sweden. In 1906 he represented officially the Norwegians in the United States at Trondhjem (now Trondheim), where King Haakon VII was crowned. And on May 17, 1914, Norway's national holiday, he delivered the main address at the Fair Grounds in St. Paul, commemorating the centennial of the Eidsvoll constitution, the fundamental law of Norway. It is little wonder that Madsen, so vibrant in patriotism and Christian devotion, should refuse to lose heart over the sight of a dilapidated church and a rundown churchyard.<sup>68</sup>

This review of the period in which an immigrant church reached its apex in numbers fails to do justice to the worshipers in the pew. From Sunday to Sunday the faithful in town and country assembled at the accustomed place and hour to sing, to pray, to hear the Word expounded, and to greet one another. Choir and congregation joined with much feeling in singing from one or another of the various collections of hymnals or psalms. Earliest to be used was the hymnal of the late 1860's, privately published by O. P. Petersen and Andrew Haagenzen and revised from time to time. These original contributions and translations of familiar hymns lifted the cultural tone of Norwegian-Danish Methodism above the stern, slow, and sometimes mournful productions of the European state church. They also imparted a knowledge of fundamental Christian beliefs.<sup>69</sup>

In 1888 the General Conference authorized the publication of a more devotional collection of psalms. For this eventuality the annual conference had already made provision by approving the appointment of a committee. Although the appointees were unable to carry out a proposal for a common hymnal for Methodist congregations in Norway, Denmark, and the United States, their efforts resulted in the printing of the *Salmebog* in 1898. At that moment the committee was composed of O. P. Petersen, Andrew

<sup>68</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1901), 10. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, July 13, 1906. C. W. Schevenius, "Hans Kristian Madsen," in *Fellowship News Bulletin* (September-October, 1955), 10-12.

<sup>69</sup> Carl W. Schevenius in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, p. 66.

Haagensen, and Nels E. Simonsen, the latter having replaced John H. Johnson after Johnson's death in 1896. The *Salmebog* contained 730 numbers, topically arranged. About 400 selections were accompanied by notes. What did it matter if, in many instances, syllables outdistanced notes? The alert organist might tactfully substitute a more suitable melody for a congregation too intent upon vocal expression to be fastidious in matters of musical technique. Until 1914 the *Salmebog* served its noble purpose well. Among its many fine tunes were selections from the great masters—Mendelssohn, Haydn, Beethoven, and Mozart.

Of private collections of hymns (*sanger*) rather than psalms (*salmer*) there were others, in addition to the one of the 1860's. Martin Hansen compiled *Sions Sange* in 1883, and the composing and translating genius of Haagensen displayed itself again in *Pilgrims Sangeren* (1884). In the course of time the conference book store secured the copyrights to the two hymnals.

In the 1890's *Israels Sange* appeared under conference sponsorship in three parts, but in two volumes (1890 and 1897). Best of the two volumes was Number One. Among its more familiar numbers were the minor-keyed and admonitory "Fly hen til Saligheds Klippen," the jubilant "Glad som Fuglen paa sin Gren i Lunden," the consecration-filled "Jesus alene mit Hjerte skal eie," and the purpose-fraught refrain, "Vi vil staa den Storm, Vi skal ankre snart i Havn."<sup>70</sup> To be sure, it was the salvation of one's soul that mattered, but who would deny that ground was being broken for the building of God's kingdom on earth as well as in heaven? When one recalls the singers of a former day there comes to mind the rugged *Landsmaal* of the Norwegian poet and novelist Arne Garborg, whose mother was counted among the Methodists in Norway. His lines portray the struggle of the determined souls, lay

<sup>70</sup> *Den Christelige Talsmand*, August 2, 1898; May 3, 1900; December 27, 1906. Free translations of the hymn titles would be "Flee to the Rock of Blessedness," "Happy as a Bird on its Branch in the Grove," "Jesus alone shall own my Heart," and "We will survive that Storm, We will anchor securely in the Haven." A later compilation under the title of *Evangeliske Toner* (1922) provided the lifeblood of the congregational worship in the closing years of the conference. See chapter eleven.



and learned, whose earthly songs were ended: <sup>71</sup>

Her ligg dei grav i grav  
 fraa heid og ned i hav  
 som stridde so.  
 Gud sign' kvar ærlig svein  
 som søv der under stein,  
 Gud sign' deim kvar og ein,  
 der dei er no.

Some of the worshipers could claim distinction, of various kinds. Chicago First Church (First and Immanuel after 1907) had several prominent laymen before the turn of the century. There were the bankers, Hauman G. Haugan and John R. Lindgren, though the latter, a Swede, was probably not a member. Their financial abilities gave birth to the eventual Chicago State Bank.<sup>72</sup> There too was Iver Larsen, father of Victor F. Lawson, founder of the *Chicago Daily News*. The elder Larsen is said to have been the first Norwegian American to sit in the Illinois state legislature. Included in the membership temporarily was the long-time editor of *Reform*, Waldemar Ager, for many years thereafter a member of the Norwegian-Danish Methodist flock in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His mother's name remained on the First Church rolls until her death. Ager, who first met the Methodists in his native Fredrikstad, Norway, edited his news and temperance paper, beginning in 1903, from Eau Claire. Others had founded that jour-

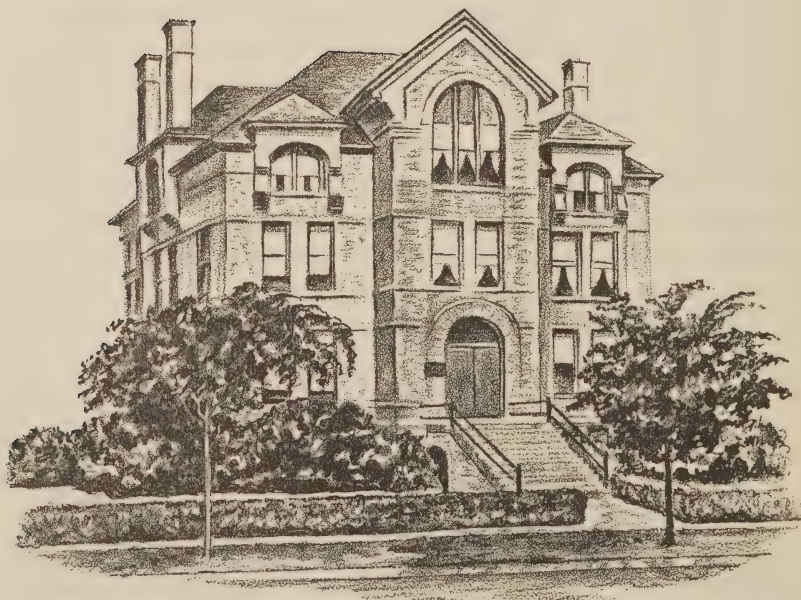
<sup>71</sup> Carl W. Schevenius's translation reads:

Here rest they grave by grave  
 from moor to gleaming wave,  
 that struggled so.  
 God bless each toiler lone  
 who sleeps beneath the stone.  
 God bless them as His own  
 where they are now.

<sup>72</sup> John R. Lindgren was Professor Simonsen's brother-in-law. He later became a member of the Swedish Methodist congregation in Evanston, and still later of First Methodist Church in the same city. For information on the laymen mentioned above see Johs. B. Wist, editor, *Norsk-Amerikanernes Festskrift*, 1914 (Decorah, Iowa, 1914), 118, and Martin Ulvestad, editor, *Nordmaendene i Amerika; Deres Rekord og Historie*, volume 1 (Minneapolis, 1907), 360 and 441; volume 2 (Minneapolis, 1913), 672 and 770.

nal in 1888. Ager came to be known among Norwegians everywhere for his exceptional talents in speaking and writing.

In the period from 1890 to 1914 Norwegian-Danish Methodism consolidated its position in the Middle West. While strengthening itself in certain communities, it was compelled to surrender its mission in the more isolated and less promising places. Prospects for extension into the silver states of Colorado and Wyoming faded. American Methodism absorbed the once Scandinavian Utah mission. More effective and more lasting was the projection of Norwegian-Danish activity into the Far West, as has been seen. Progress would also be registered in the immigrant and sailor centers along the Atlantic seaboard, beginning in New York.



The Norwegian-Danish Theological Seminary  
Evanston, Illinois

## *The East Welcomes New Pulpits*

ONE OF THE MOST momentous developments in Scandinavian Methodism, whether in Europe or in America, began with the establishment of the Bethel Ship seamen's mission in New York harbor. This evangelistic and service enterprise was built, in the first instance, upon the pioneer efforts of Peter Bergner, a Swede who had turned to Methodism in America. Bergner first held religious services on an old vessel, later to be discarded in favor of the "Henry Leeds," a condemned brig which was remodeled into a chapel and christened "Bethel Ship John Wesley." When by 1857 leakages required constant pumping, the barkantine "Carrier Pigeon" was purchased and renamed "John Wesley II." The original ship and its successor achieved their importance mainly from the hard work of Olof G. Hedstrøm. This colorful, homespun, Swedish pastor, himself won to Methodism partly through the influence of his American wife, the former Caroline Pinckley, was summoned from his little charge in the Catskills of New York to minister to the diverse needs of Scandinavian seamen in the teeming port city.

Hedstrøm's original appointment read: "North River Mission." He conducted his first service of worship on the Bethel Ship on Sunday, May 25, 1845. Incorporation of "The First North River Bethel Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church" followed (July 7, 1845), as recorded in the office of the register of the County of New York (July 11, 1845).

Assisting Hedstrøm for longer or shorter periods of time were Ole Helland, Carl P. Agrelius, and Ole Peter (O. P.) Petersen.<sup>1</sup> Helland, an immigrant of 1836 from Norway, served as a lay missionary for the Mariner's Bethel Church of New York City among Scandinavian seamen in the late 1830's. In such capacity he was a forerunner of both Bergner and Hedstrøm. Some 20 years later,

<sup>1</sup> For Helland, Bergner, and Petersen see chapter one, for Agrelius chapter two.

from 1855 to 1858, he aided Hedstrøm at the Bethel Ship before joining the Wisconsin Conference, in which he served several Norwegian-Danish charges.

Agrelius yielded to Methodism in his native Sweden after 26 years in the Lutheran pulpit ministry. His work in the Bethel Ship mission (1848-49) was probably of less significance than his quarter-century of devoted effort in the Middle West, primarily among Norwegian and Danish immigrants.

Also among the men associated with Hedstrøm was O. P. Petersen, whose biblical preaching, distinctive organizing ability, and noble character would play a decisive role in the development of Methodism among Norwegians in America as well as in the homeland. After a year with Hedstrøm (1850-51) he became preoccupied with the church in the Middle West and in Norway. In the period from 1860 to 1863 he served the Bethel Ship mission, during Hedstrøm's temporary illness. He returned to Hedstrøm's side in 1872. A résumé of his eventful career is helpful to an understanding of his place in the growth of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the East.

The following observations concerning Petersen are disclosed in the numerous letters and papers placed at the disposal of his biographer, Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, by Petersen's son-in-law, Charles H. Johnson.<sup>2</sup> Following his sanctifying experience in the harbor of Mobile, Alabama, in January of 1849, Petersen returned to Norway to tell of his soul-satisfying transformation. From June of 1849, when he landed in his birthplace, Fredrikstad, until April of 1850 this eloquent yet humble layman lit the fires of evangelism in many Norwegian communities.

Upon returning to New York with his newly acquired wife, the former Anne Marie Amundsen, Petersen became increasingly sensitive to a divine call to the Christian ministry. It was at this critical juncture that Hedstrøm exerted a gentle but firm pressure upon his reluctant young friend. Methodist leaders, probably upon Hedstrøm's recommendation, all but implored Petersen to take up the work among Scandinavian sailors, the great majority

<sup>2</sup> Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, *Livsbilleder af O. P. Petersen* (Chicago, Illinois, 1903), 42 ff.



of whom were Norwegians. Letters arrived simultaneously from chairman James Floy of the committee on home missions, from secretary John F. Durbin of the Missionary Society, and from David Terry, corresponding secretary of the society.

Despite Petersen's hesitancy, grounded in a Moses-like feeling of inadequacy and in a sincere desire to choose the right course, events moved him rapidly into the pastorate. He became Hedstrøm's right hand man at the Bethel Ship John Wesley. Hedstrøm promptly arranged for Petersen's appearance before the quarterly conference of the Duane Street Church in New York, and that evening (June 10, 1851) he was recommended for a license to preach. In the fall of 1851 Bishop C. S. Janes sent him to Iowa as a missionary to the Norwegian settlers and, as has been noted in an earlier chapter, he was urged by Bishop Beverly Waugh in 1853 to return to Norway to resume the work of evangelism and organization. Petersen stopped *en route* at a little known town called Brooklyn, Pennsylvania, long enough to receive ordination both as deacon and as elder (July 31, 1853).

In 1859 Methodist officials honored O. P. Petersen's request to be transferred to America. His mission to Norway was accomplished. The loyal friends who followed him to Moss on the Oslofjord from the Østfold communities of Sarpsborg, Fredrikstad, and nearby places represented a total Methodist constituency of some 300 souls in Norway.<sup>3</sup> From this point on Petersen served intermittently in America in the East and the Middle West, and for a second time in Norway (1869-71). He was assigned to the Norwegian-Danish mission in the East (1874-78), to the Bethel-ship Norwegian Church in Brooklyn (1888-91), and finally, in the last year of his life, to the newly created Brooklyn Second Church (1901).

The years from 1860 to 1863 were of special importance in that the number of Norwegian (and other Scandinavian) vessels and sailors sharply increased with heavier importation of European goods to the North during the Civil War. Petersen used the opportunity to distribute Bibles, New Testaments, religious books, and

<sup>3</sup> *Missionary Advocate* (October, 1959).

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tracts—about 90,000 tracts alone in 1862. Hundreds of impressionable Norwegian seamen had their first encounter with heart-searching Methodist preaching. Hedstrøm, then on a tour of the Scandinavian lands, found Bethel Ship converts in many places, products of his own evangelistic efforts and of Petersen's.<sup>4</sup> Hedstrøm's familiar name is identified with the Bethel Ship until his permanent retirement in 1875. He died in 1877, having given of himself freely for some 30 years as captain of souls.

Swedes and Norwegians went their separate ways after the Civil War. Some Bethel Ship Swedes made their exit to Brooklyn and rented a hall in 1866, prior to purchasing a lot on Pacific Street near Fifth Avenue. A church was dedicated in 1868, but the First North River Bethel Society still had its home office on the Bethel Ship. A second church (later Immanuel), taking the place of the first, was built on Dean Street near Fifth Avenue and dedicated in 1872. The First North River Bethel Society built the church. The Bethel Ship, with Hedstrøm still at the helm, retained the corporate name. On March 29, 1873, notice was given for the election of seven trustees for the Dean Street church. The election was held on May 5 in the basement of the church, with Rev. Albert Ericson as chairman, but a new election was ordered to be held on the Bethel Ship. Later roll calls indicate that such an election was held.<sup>5</sup>

Many Norwegians, no longer sailing the seas, took up permanent residence in Brooklyn. They began to meet in Beach Place, near Hamilton Ferry, in 1872 and soon moved to the Grønros home at 156 Degraw Street. Here was the nucleus for the 17-member congregation organized by O. P. Petersen on May 3, 1874. Petersen served as pastor to 1878, having his membership in the New York East Conference.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Eltzholtz, *Livsbilleder af O. P. Petersen*, 207-209. *Missionary Advocate* (April, 1863). Norwegian vessels were said to have generally outnumbered Swedish in a ratio of 10 to 1; O. P. Petersen in *Tenth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Church Society* (1889).

<sup>5</sup> *100th Anniversary of the Immanuel Swedish Methodist Church* (Brooklyn, New York, 1945), 20-21. Lars Marum to A.W.A., August, 1962.

<sup>6</sup> *Jubilaeums Aarbog; Aarbogen for den Norsk-Danske Mission og den Norsk-Danske Epworth Liga Konvention* (Brooklyn, New York, 1924), 41.

In 1889 O. P. Petersen in the Tenth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Church Society presented his version of the origin of the Bethelship Norwegian Methodist Episcopal Church. From 1874 to 1876, said he, the Missionary Society maintained two seamen's missions, one Swedish and the other Norwegian. The New York East Conference decided in 1876 to combine the two. On August 12th of that year the Bethel Ship was moved from pier number 11, North River, to the foot of Harrison Street in Brooklyn and placed under the leadership of the Norwegian-Danish mission. Services were conducted on the Brooklyn-moored Bethel Ship until 1879, when the vessel was sold. Thereafter it was used as a chapel for the Erie Canal boatmen calling at Jersey City, New Jersey. In the same year Edwin Mead, a wealthy American, purchased for the Norwegians the Mariner's Church, already a sailors' mission, on President and Van Brunt Streets. In its place on that site was erected a brick structure in 1881, again a gift of Mr. Mead's, as a memorial to his daughter Julia. By order of the state supreme court, King's County, New York (September 12, 1881), the name was changed from Mariner's to Bethelship Norwegian. There is legal support, therefore, for the Norwegian claim of inheritance of the original and corporate name, Bethel.<sup>7</sup>

Both Swedes and Norwegians took pride in perpetuating the names Bethel and Bethelship. The Swedes were the first to cut their moorings, in 1866. The Norwegians followed in 1872. The Swedish congregation ashore dates from 1868, the Norwegian from 1874. But through Hedstrøm personally the Swedes remained identified with the Bethel Ship until 1876. It is tempting to conclude that the American Methodist endorsement of the Bethel Ship mission as a combined Scandinavian enterprise in 1876 under O. P. Petersen's leadership insured retention of the name by Petersen's flock, and that when the Swedes left the ship they also left the name, which was not recognizable in "Immanuel." On February 5, 1883, however, the First North River Bethel Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church applied to the court

<sup>7</sup> Eltzholtz, *Livsbilleder*, 251, *Jubilaeums Aarbog*, 41. Haagensen, *Historie*, 193-194. 58th Annual Report of the Missionary Society to the General Conference (January, 1877). Lars Marum to A.W.A., February 13, 1962.

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of common pleas located in New York County, for permission to change its name to Immanuel Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church, effective March 14, 1883. Permission was granted.

In the thinking of Lars Marum, who has probably devoted himself to the legal questions above more than any other man, both the Immanuel Church and the Bethelship Church descended from the Bethel Ship. In his opinion, when the Swedes began work ashore they did so under the auspices of the First North River Bethel Society. From all indications this society was a group of Americans organized for the purposes of carrying on missionary work among Scandinavian sailors in New York harbor. Its board of trustees seems to have been a self-perpetuating body. Marum closes with this observation: when the Swedes organized their congregation on land and chose the name "Immanuel" rather than "Bethel" or "Bethelship," the Norwegians were left in charge of the Bethel Ship and were free to adopt the name "Bethelship" when their land congregation was organized in 1874.<sup>8</sup>

The spirit of the Bethel Ship, of Hedstrøm and Petersen and their noble co-workers, would prevail in both Swedish and Norwegian-Danish Methodism, not only in Brooklyn but in America and to a considerable degree in the European homelands. It is unrealistic and unduly imaginative, however, to attribute the beginnings of all Scandinavian and Scandinavian-American Methodist work directly or solely to the Bethel Ship. Guilty of a kind of ecclesiastical spread-eagleism in estimating the importance of the vessels "John Wesley" is a paragraph from a Norwegian source, *Jubilaeums Aarbog* (page 43). One sentence reads, "Out of the humble beginning have grown ten annual conferences, two missionary conferences, and one mission, with about 550 pastors now living, and 620 churches, 60,000 members, and 74,000 Sunday school pupils." Little wonder that a similar statement appears in an undated folder entitled "Bethelship" published by the

<sup>8</sup> Much of the above information is available in the trustees' minutes and church records of Bethelship. They are now in possession of Arthur S. Marshall, present pastor of the Bethelship Church. Lars Marum remains, however, the most complete source of information, owing to his extensive studies in this area.



Board of Missions and Church Extension in the 1940's. Articles published in *The Christian Advocate* ("100 Years from Ship to Shore," May 10, 1945) and *Together* ("Old Bethel: the Ship that was a Church," August, 1961) do little to deflate the legend.

No congregation in the East was to prosper more than Bethelship (the later spelling). During Petersen's absence of ten years, when he served in the Wisconsin and Norwegian-Danish Conferences, the congregation was ably shepherded by Bernt Johanneesen, Christian Treider, and Martin Hansen. Petersen's report to the Brooklyn Church Society in 1889 explained that the membership of 153 fell short of measuring the influence of the Bethelship Church, since the work was largely among people on the move. In 1891 there were 221 members.

Bethelship continued to grow under competent ministerial leadership after Petersen's second departure, in 1891. S. E. Simonson, H. G. Smeland, Anton Martin Trelstad, Hans C. Munson, and Yngvar Johansen followed in order, down to 1924. In 1892 a preponderance of Italian immigrants in the neighborhood motivated the Scandinavians to rent quarters temporarily in a hall on Court Street. Soon they purchased a brick church, a chapel, and a parsonage on Carroll Street at a price of \$16,000. In 1904, under Trelstad, a slum mission was opened and street meetings were conducted. It was not unusual for Trelstad to invade the precincts of the saloon to rescue a wayward person and to defend in the courtroom those who had inadvertently been enticed into legal violations by clever and unscrupulous professionals. In 1912 the slum mission was turned over to the Brooklyn and Long Island Church Society in exchange for the church and parsonage of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church. The parsonage was converted into a seamen's home, recalling the original function of the congregation. The entire property was sold in 1917 to the Y.M.C.A. to be used as a seamen's branch. Yngvar Johansen organized a Central Mission in 1923. In the five-year period from 1919 to 1924 Bethelship may have been in its prime. In those years the congregation, numbering about 400, gave \$12,000 to missions and \$5,000 to charitable enterprises. The Epworth

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League and the Sunday school each had over 200 members.<sup>9</sup>

A congregation took shape in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, during the depression of the 1870's. From Francis Asbury's journals it is learned that he preached in Perth Amboy on February 27, 1772. An American Methodist congregation was formed in 1818. By the 1860's a number of Danish immigrants were attracted through the English-language work. A class of 19 members was formed in 1872. According to the golden anniversary account, Hedstrøm helped to guide activities until the appointment of Burriel Smith, a Dane, in 1874. The date of incorporation, under state law, is given as October 26, 1874. Smith served simultaneously a Swedish congregation at Dover. He left Perth Amboy in 1880, after six years, but returned for another pastorate from 1891 to 1898. From the original 16 members the Perth Amboy parishioners grew to 65 in 1894.<sup>10</sup>

The seventieth anniversary brochure of Perth Amboy's Wesley Church cites the coming of a new day with the pastorate of Andrew Hansen from 1898 to 1904. "Through his ministry," it was stated, "many persons were converted and added to the church. The enlarged church on State Street became too small." Also, the congregation during Hansen's term lost its exclusively Danish character. On the church rolls at the time of his departure in 1904 were 24 Swedes and 30 Norwegians. Of the new structure it was written: "The building measures in length 68 feet, breadth 44 feet. The steeple is 65 feet high. The church proper seats 250,

<sup>9</sup> *Jubilæums Aarbog—Aarbogen for den Norsk-Danske Mission og den Norsk-Danske Epworth Liga Konvention* (1924), 42. Andrew Hansen, "Methodistkirkens Norsk-Danske Virksomhed i de Østlige Stater af Amerika," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, September 9, 1926. Hans A. Ofstie in *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 3, 1938.

<sup>10</sup> *These Seventy Years, 1874-1944*, 9, 13, and 14; anniversary brochure of the Wesley Church, Perth Amboy. Formal organization must have occurred earlier in the year 1874. An old document signed by Hedstrøm reads: "I hereby transfer this classbook and members of the M.E. Church at Perth Amboy, that has been connected with the Bethel Ship, New York City, to the now present pastor, Rev. Burjell Smidth (sic) of the Newark Conference." See Andrew Hansen, "Norwegian and Danish Methodism in the Eastern States," in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, p. 62.

Haagensen, 191. C. J. Conrad. "Menigheden i Perth Amboy, N.J.," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 20, 1924. Andrew Hansen in *Evangelisk Tidende*, September 9, 1926.

and the chapel on the side 150, the two being separated by sliding doors." A pipe organ was installed during the pastorate of C. J. Conrad (1921-25). Looking back fifty years in 1924 pastor Conrad could name many former members who had answered the call to the Christian ministry.<sup>11</sup> In P. M. Peterson's time (1925-29) an annex costing \$40,500 was constructed. Erling C. Edvardsen (1929-34) inherited the depression and labored faithfully with the help of Miss Carrie Nixon, a deaconess.

Third in the order of establishment in the East was Concord, Massachusetts. It is reported that the first Methodist service in a Scandinavian tongue was conducted there by E. C. Charlton on October 26, 1875. He organized a class in connection with the American Maynard Church. About 1879 he relinquished the field to one H. Olson, a Swedish minister of Boston. The congregation was organized on February 6, 1887.<sup>12</sup> Later that year they requested a pastor from the Norwegian-Danish Conference. Elliot Hansen was the answer to their desire.

Dedication of the Concord church came in 1893 during the ministry of Jens P. Andersen, himself a product of earlier Methodist work in that community. It is said that his conversion through the influence of a Swedish Methodist pastor followed a near-drowning experience in historic Walden Pond. Determined to heed a call to the ministry, Andersen attended the seminary in Evanston (1891-93) and was admitted to the New England Conference in 1893. To editor Haagenzen of the *Talsmand* he wrote, "Our friends in Boston and Concord have often cheered us (I say cheered because one should not write in the paper about so-called surprise parties). Two brothers studying at Boston University are very helpful to us. C. Eglund, preparing to be a doctor, plays and conducts the singing here every Sunday. A. Knud-

<sup>11</sup> These former members were named: Martin W. Buck, Jacob Thompson, N. C. Andersen, Adolf Carstensen, Andrew Petersen, Grebert Andersen, H. S. Haver, Eilert Spørensen, Niels Madsen, Andrew Hermansen, Halvard Folkestad, and M. S. Haver. For two years Alma Widerstrøm served as a missionary in Utah. *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 20, 1924.

<sup>12</sup> Charles E. Pedersen, "Fortieth Anniversary of Concord, Massachusetts," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, March 24, 1927.

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sen, who is preparing for the ministry, is much interested. He preached in Concord one Sunday recently to great blessing.”<sup>13</sup>

The “Knudsen” referred to by J. P. Andersen (often called “J.P.”) is none other than Albert C. Knudson, eminent theologian and son of the Midwestern pioneer preacher, Asle Knudsen. Despite the circumstance that his life was lived primarily within the wider sphere of American Methodism and the church at large, a résumé of his achievements is probably appropriate. According to James Sanaker, a certain bishop once declared that if American Methodism had received nothing more for its missionary expenditure than the personality of Albert C. Knudson it would still have been a profitable investment. Sanaker delighted in telling of the outstanding men and women, thirty of them teachers, who got their start in the Washington Prairie circuit in Iowa. Most prominent of these was Knudson.<sup>14</sup> His venerable father joined the Methodists as a young man in Locust, Iowa, one of the points on the circuit. The son Albert received some of his early education in Freeport, where the parsonage was located.

Albert Cornelius Knudson was born in 1873 in Grand Meadow, Minnesota. Following his graduation with distinction from the University of Minnesota, and his theological training in Boston University, he studied in the Universities of Jena and Berlin on a stipend from Boston University. In 1898 Iliff School of Theology, located in Denver, called him to the professorship of church history. Boston University conferred upon him the Ph.D. degree in 1900. From 1900 to 1906 he taught at Baker University and at Allegheny College. His long and conspicuous teaching career at Boston University began in 1906, as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament exegesis. Editor Rasmus B. Wilhelmsen of the *Talsmand* commented very favorably upon Knudson’s effectiveness as a theologian in his alma mater, when in 1910 he was lecturing on Sundays for the Methodist Club of Harvard University. It was

<sup>13</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende*, October 26, 1933. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1934), 66; memorial by Edward Evensen. J. P. Andersen’s letter to Haagenen was dated November 22, 1893.

<sup>14</sup> James Sanaker, “To our young people,” in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, February 3, 1921.



said to be the largest voluntary Bible class in fifty years at Harvard.<sup>15</sup>

Tributes to Knudson's scholarship flowed in deserving measure, some of them appearing in the *Talsmand*. The Eastern District of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, meeting in Boston in 1919, adopted a resolution expressing great appreciation for an especially informative lecture. In 1920 the Christian Literature Society of Japan made plans to translate Knudson's most recent book, *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament*. During that summer he had written a manual on "The Prophetic Movement in Israel," for use in teacher-training classes of both the Northern and the Southern Methodist denominations. The products of his mind and pen eventually included many books, the last of which, *Basic Issues in Thought*, was published in 1950. Editor P. M. Peterson congratulated Knudson in 1921 upon his promotion to a professorship in systematic theology, which he held until his retirement in 1943. From 1926 to 1938 Knudson also served as dean of the school of theology. One of the last references to this eminent theologian appeared in 1937, when *Evangelisk Tidende* reprinted from the paper of First Methodist Church in Oslo, Norway, a summary of Knudson's achievements. The item stated that he was the son of the oldest Norwegian Methodist pastor in the world, Asle Knudsen then being 94. Albert had been associated with Boston University for 36 years. He attended the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order that summer as a delegate. His father, Asle, died in 1939 at the advanced age of 95.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Much of the information on Knudson is available in *Who Was Who in America* (A. N. Marquis Company, Chicago, 1960), volume 3, 1951-60, p. 486. See also *Den Christelige Talsmand*, January 25, 1898, and November 3, 1910. Editor Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen had a special interest in higher education. One of his sons, Arthur, received a Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin and served for many years at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota, as professor of history and director of admissions.

<sup>16</sup> Albert Knudson died in 1953. Over a period of 42 years he had authored the following books: *The Old Testament Problem* (1908), *Beacon Lights of Prophecy* (1914), *The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament* (1918), *The Prophetic Movement in Israel* (1921), *Present Tendencies in Religious Thought* (1924), *The Philosophy of Personalism* (1927), *The Doctrine of God* (1930), *The Doctrine of Redemption* (1933), *The Validity of Religious Experience* (1937), *The Principles of Christian Ethics* (1943), *The Philosophy of War and Peace* (1947), and *Basic Issues*

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Returning to Concord, among J. P. Andersen's successes there in the 1890's was his persuasive influence over P. M. (Peter Martin) Peterson, a fellow Dane who later ministered effectively to congregations in the Middle West and the East. To illustrate the modest beginnings of the Concord fellowship, it contributed only \$50.00 toward the pastor's salary in 1893 and promised only \$200.00 in 1894. Those were of course panic years. Membership stood at 19 active and 21 on trial in 1894.<sup>17</sup>

Charles Henry Johnson, son-in-law of O. P. Petersen, relieved J. P. Andersen in Concord in 1899. At that time Johnson appears to have been a student in both Harvard and Boston Universities, from which institutions he received the degrees of bachelor of arts and bachelor of systematic theology, respectively, in 1902. From this point on his meteoric course took him through administration of orphanages and prisons into social welfare, Russian relief, and Masonry.<sup>18</sup>

In the seaport city of Boston, meetings were first conducted in the period 1893-99 by J. P. Andersen. Next came the ever-willing though "retired" O. P. Petersen, who had almost nostalgically hoped to minister some time to his countrymen in Boston. Clustered around that city were memories of his first days in America as a young seaman. Now after a half-century his hair was white and his voice weak, but he was still dynamic. Formal organization in Boston had to wait until 1903.

Meanwhile, a more promising beginning had been made in

*in Thought* (1950). See also *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, April 14, 1921, and *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 18, 1937.

<sup>17</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1902), 44. Haagensen, *Historie*, 191.

<sup>18</sup> Information on Charles Henry Johnson is available in *Who Was Who in America* (Chicago, 1950), volume 2, page 283. His first wife, Elvira, daughter of O. P. Petersen, died in 1908. He then married Mrs. May B. Wallis. Johnson died in 1948. These are among his offices and achievements: organizer of the committee on prevention of tuberculosis, New York City; superintendent of St. Christopher's Home for Children, Dobbs Ferry, New York; deputy warden of Sing Sing Prison; secretary of the New York State board of charities; commissioner of social welfare in New York State; member of the American Relief Administration in Russia (1922); 33rd degree Mason; Grand Master of Masons, State of New York; president of the Masonic Relief Association of the United States and Canada; and member of the Presbyterian Church, which may mean that his second wife was of that denomination.

the little community of Berlin Mills (later Berlin), New Hampshire, where again J. P. Andersen of Concord had made the initial contact, in 1898. Andersen prepared the way for O. T. Field, about to graduate from the Evanston seminary. Field found an organized class and, after his arrival, proceeded to form, with an eye toward the practical, a sewing society and a Sunday school.

The counterparts of Carl J. Larsen on the Pacific Coast were Andrew Hansen and Albert Hansen in the East. The Hansens were not related. Andrew Hansen attended his first Methodist meeting in Porsgrund, Norway, and was converted later at Brevik. He tried to evade the call to the ministry by emigrating, but in Chicago his pastors persuaded him to assist in open air meetings, where at least two men with good speaking voices were required. His first pastorate was Manistee, Michigan (1890-94). Kedzie Avenue, Chicago, was his next field of labor (1894-98) and, as in Manistee, the membership total rose sharply. From the faithful 37 of 1894, it increased to 112, with Sunday congregations of over 200. Hansen began work in Avondale, northwest of Kedzie, where now the active Bethany Church testifies to his foresight and energy. Then, as we have seen, he was appointed to Perth Amboy, New Jersey (1898-1904).<sup>19</sup>

One of Andrew Hansen's most gratifying achievements came in the new Sunset Park Church of south Brooklyn. O. P. Petersen is said to have held meetings in that section as early as 1875. For a decade or so, from 1891 on, Bethelship owned and supported a church building in Blythebourne. In 1901 that congregation was organized, but Petersen's death brought an early end to the effort. Sunset Park, however, received many of its charter members from the Blythebourne fellowship. Under Trelstad Bethelship purchased a lot for Sunset Park early in 1907 and saw the new church dedicated by December. Prior to the purchase Trelstad's young assistant, Hans A. Ofstie, had been conducting services in a tailor shop in that community. The congregation was organized in 1909 and was served by Ofstie until his transfer in 1910 to the

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Hansen, "50 Aar som Metodistpraedikant" (Fifty Years as a Methodist Preacher), in *Evangelisk Tidende*, July 25, 1940. This article was republished from *Nordisk Tidende* of Brooklyn.

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Norwegian-Danish Conference of the Middle West. After serving six years in Boston, Andrew Hansen arrived to take the Sunset Park pulpit in 1910. He reported finding a hundred active members. With help from the Carnegie fund a pipe organ was installed in 1913. The congregation was blessed with musical leadership. The first organist and choir director, Gustav Pettersen, was succeeded by the young and virile Anders Emile. Sunday school enrollment reached 500. After six years Hansen was appointed Sunday school missionary for the Eastern states. One captures some of his enthusiasm in his report submitted to the *Talsmand* in 1909: "Populous colonies await our coming to Portland, Maine; Providence, Rhode Island; Millville, Massachusetts; Jersey City, New Jersey; Staten Island, New York, and many other places in this part of the country."<sup>20</sup>

The second man, Albert Hansen, also born in Norway, came under the influence of Nels E. Simonsen there. At that time the Wisconsin-born Simonsen, preparing for his assignment as superintendent of the Theological School in Evanston, Illinois, was studying Norwegian language and literature in Oslo. Albert Hansen came to the United States in 1889. It was in his home in Boston that J. P. Andersen first held meetings for Norwegians and Danes in that city. Hansen's entrance into the ministry came with an appointment in 1902 to Berlin, New Hampshire, which had been his first place of residence in America. Four years later he moved to Philadelphia and organized a congregation. The city mission there loaned him money for the purchase of church property. During the nine years in the city of brotherly love many a lonesome Norwegian sailor was entertained. In an appeal for support of a Christmas tree festival in 1914 Hansen wrote, "Many sailors are stranded this year because of the war. During the past five years we have gladdened from 200 to 300 men. This year we would like to serve even more. Men from all nationalities and from all kinds of lodging places are invited." It was probably in

<sup>20</sup> *Jubilaums Aarbog*, 52. Andrew Hansen in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); historical section, page 63. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, August 5, 1909. Lars Marum to C. W. Schevenius, December 27, 1961.



recognition of the many years of service to sailors, and in appreciation of the work of Methodism, that Crown Prince Olav and Princess Märtha visited the Philadelphia church in 1939. On that occasion Prince Olav spoke, and an "immense crowd" sang "Vor Gud han er saa fast en borg." <sup>21</sup>

Albert Hansen expanded his administrative talent to Buffalo and Corning, New York, and to Baltimore, Maryland. In Buffalo Norwegian believers met in private homes and became organized in 1910. Their first pastor, Sigbjørn Fosdal, came directly from the Theological School in Evanston. He was also the first to be provided with financial support by the Epworth League Inner Mission, which had been organized in 1911. Hansen assumed the pastoral leadership in Buffalo in 1915, when his long ministry in Philadelphia came to an end. <sup>22</sup>

Although the official beginning of the work in Baltimore in 1915 was mainly the result of Hansen's visits from Philadelphia, Peter B. Smith had held meetings there in 1910. Smith's chief contribution as a pastor was in the Middle West, yet Baltimore and the East claimed a good share of his life, which began in Denmark. In Baltimore he first landed as a seaman in 1858. Spiritually awakened on his voyage to America, he bought two religious books, printed in German, and discovered that they contained sermons by one John Wesley and made frequent reference to "Methodists," a people of whom the well-traveled Smith had never heard. Through the preaching of O. P. Petersen in Bethelship in 1860, and with admirable personal determination, he found his way to satisfaction. Following his retirement in 1886, he and his wife lived for many years in Neenah, Wisconsin, and Chicago, until they accepted the invitation of their son Cephas, in business with a chemical firm in Baltimore and later in New York, to live with him. And so it happened that the septuagenarian whose ministry had long since been pronounced ended became instrumental

<sup>21</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, November 19, 1914. J. P. Johnsen, "Norwegian Royalty Visits Our Church in Philadelphia," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, July 27, 1939. The visit took place on Saturday morning, July 1, 1939.

<sup>22</sup> *Jubilaeums Aarbog*, 60.

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once again in founding a congregation. This time it was Baltimore, in 1910.<sup>23</sup>

In the *Talsmand* Albert Hansen called attention to the historic location of the Baltimore congregation, in the vicinity of Francis Asbury's grave.<sup>24</sup> While the membership was at times predominantly Swedish they were always served by Norwegian or Danish pastors. The Baltimore appointment also carried the responsibility of a sailors' mission.

While serving Buffalo (1915-18) Albert Hansen responded to a suggestion of the Swedish district superintendent, Nels Glemaker, to meet with the unchurched Norwegian Methodist immigrants of Corning, New York. It is probable, however, that Sigbjørn Fosdal, Hansen's predecessor in Buffalo, was the first Norwegian Methodist preacher to visit Corning, since he is reported to have performed baptisms there. Some of the citizens were Methodists from Hønefoss in Norway. Others, formerly glass blowers from Høvig and Hadeland in Norway, were attracted to the big Corning glass works. The congregation dates officially from 1915. In 1916 Hansen became the first resident pastor and won the interest and loyalty of the owners of the glass works.<sup>25</sup> The veteran missionary and pastor served Providence, Rhode Island, from 1921 to 1927. It was his last charge. Death came in 1928.

Among the later Eastern congregations to take shape were Providence and Jersey City. In 1913 Sophus A. Norlemann of Concord initiated the Providence activity. In 1915 Hans S. Haver, while editing *Østens Missionær*, began to conduct services in Jersey City. Friends from Brooklyn had already made contacts there. Formal organization came in 1916, with 13 charter members.<sup>26</sup>

As a successor to the "Bronx Church," which became a casualty to shifting population, the Central Church was organized in 1928.

<sup>23</sup> P. B. Smith, "Erindringer," (Recollections), in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, December 15, 1910 and February 11, 1915.

<sup>24</sup> Albert M. Hansen, "Lidt fra Østen" (A Little from the East), in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, May 6, 1915.

<sup>25</sup> *Jubilaeums Aarbog*, 65.

<sup>26</sup> *Jubilaeums Aarbog*, 65-66. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, August 24, 1916.

Driven from one location to another, Central Church finally had its own institutional building in Harlem by 1943. Last in the succession of congregations in the East was Queens, New York, born in 1930.

Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the East had no separate status. In 1915, for example, its eleven congregations and three missions were scattered over seven states and distributed over a like number of annual conferences of the American church. The annual conferences included the New York East, the Philadelphia, the Baltimore, the New England, the New England Southern, the Maine, and the Genesee. The twelve pastors did conduct their own preachers' meetings, beginning in 1902 at Perth Amboy and ending in 1917 at Corning.

From 1918 to 1924 the preachers' meetings were called district meetings and included lay representatives. As before, the district belonged to no single annual conference. At the meeting of 1919 it was reported that there were fourteen churches, eight parsonages, 1,067 members in full connection, 1,682 Sunday school pupils, and 637 Epworth Leaguers. District meetings continued until 1924, in which year the General Conference authorized the organization of a Norwegian-Danish Mission. Meanwhile, reports of annual district meetings appeared, printed in Norwegian. Among the items of 1920 was an announcement of the sale of the church and parsonage in the Bronx. Activity was resumed there when the Central Church was founded in 1926.

Several men voiced their dissatisfaction with the anomalous district arrangement. In 1919 Ottar Hofstad inquired, "Where are we?," the subject of over two columns in the *Talsmand*.<sup>27</sup> He cited the "unnatural" spread of congregations. The pastors sat in their respective annual conferences, he said, "Like lonesome swallows on the roof, as ciphers among the many." With questionable fairness he declared, "The only time we hear our names during the conference sessions is during the roll call. If any of us dare to say a word, we are regarded as dumb step-children." He urged a better understanding among the Norwegian and Danish Meth-

<sup>27</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 11, 1919.

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odists in America, since they knew their own problems best. Without support from the Missionary Society, he believed, there would be a greater incentive for the Eastern congregations to finance themselves, as they had been doing in the Middle West.

At the preachers' meeting in Brooklyn in 1922 Andrew Hansen proposed the formation of a mission conference.<sup>28</sup> He cited the progress already made as well as the opportunities that lay ahead. Said he, "We have a field of over 100,000 souls, born in Norway or Denmark, in ten Eastern states. Not more than 14,000 of those here now are members of any Norwegian or Danish church." He pointed out that eight of the theological students in Evanston hailed from the East. Financially, he explained, much had been accomplished. Benevolences, including Centenary (World Service) giving, totalled \$11,898, which was about \$3,000 more than had been received from the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension. Besides, \$527 had been raised for the Theological School, \$13,800 paid on indebtedness, and \$6,498 paid for buildings and improvements.

Andrew Hansen went on to express his doubts of the wisdom of a system that permitted the foreign-language work to be divided among eight English-speaking conferences, with five bishops in charge. He recommended a memorial to the General Conference requesting permission to reorganize as a mission conference. Then there would be one organization, one bishop, and all preachers would be appointed at the same time of year. Ministers might keep their membership in their respective annual conferences if they preferred.

Lars Marum, Bethelship layman, questioned the integrity of pastors who advocated dissolution.<sup>29</sup> He suggested organizing Norwegian-Danish Methodism for the country as a whole. It would be affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church but would not be subject to its jurisdiction. The Norwegian-Danish church would have its own bishop or superintendent, who would

<sup>28</sup> Andrew Hansen, "A Survey of the Work of the Methodist Episcopal Church among the Norwegian-Danish People of the Eastern States of America," in *Evangelsk Tidende*, November 16, 1922.

<sup>29</sup> *Evangelsk Tidende*, May 31, 1923.



preside over the annual meetings of three areas: the East, the Middle West, and the West. A national meeting might be held every second or third year.

Albert Hansen favored a compromise between Marum's national plan and Andrew Hansen's mission conference proposal.<sup>30</sup> His idea embraced a "general conference" of the Norwegians and Danes in April of 1924, a month prior to the meeting of the quadrennial General Conference of the mother church. Thus common plans might be laid for a nation-wide activity. Pointing again to the thousands of Norwegian and Danish folk in the Eastern states, most of them outside of the church, he said that the work was just beginning. As a layman for twelve years and a pastor for 22, within American conferences, much had aroused his wonder and respect, he admitted. But much had stirred his anger too, he declared. Some of the leading personalities in American Methodism were "colossally ignorant" concerning the Norwegian-Danish branch of their communion, said Hansen.

When the Eastern District was reorganized into a mission in 1924, activity had ceased in some places and had taken on larger proportions in others. The sanctuary doors had been closed in Bridgeport, Connecticut; Westfield, New Jersey; Claremont, New Hampshire; the Bronx and South Ozone Park in New York; and Worcester, Lynn, and Millville in Massachusetts. Yet in summing up a half-century of effort, from the beginnings of Bethelship and Perth Amboy in 1874, the jubilee year book (*Jubilaemus Aarbog*) could state: "Fifty years ago there were no churches and only two colonies. Today there are twelve churches with 1,400 members, 1,700 Sunday school pupils, and 700 Epworth Leaguers." Bethelship and Sunset Park led, respectively, with 375 and 267 members. Boston ranked third with 125.<sup>31</sup>

The growth of the Epworth League in the East paralleled closely congregational growth. Bethelship had the distinction of entertaining the first convention on May 30 (Memorial Day), 1904. The delegates elected Anton Trelstad president and Lars Marum,

<sup>30</sup> "Our Future Work in America," *Evangelisk Tidende*, September 20, 1923.

<sup>31</sup> *Jubilaemus Aarbog*, 40.

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prominent layman, secretary for the coming months. Thus a precedent was established. Ministers usually served as presidents, sometimes of the local chapters as well, in the earlier years. At a second convention, at Perth Amboy, on November 24 (Thanksgiving Day), 1904, it was decided that future conventions should be held on Memorial Day. From the *Talsmand* it is learned that at the fifth convention, at Perth Amboy in 1907, Hans A. Ofstie's Norwegian presentation of "What results can and should be expected of our literary work?" was followed by a discussion in which six other pastors, no laymen being mentioned, were limited to three minutes each.<sup>32</sup>

In the 25th anniversary booklet (1929), published for the most part in Norwegian, some interesting facts come to light. The first two-day convention was held in Bethelship in 1908. Sunset Park was represented for the first time, at Philadelphia, in 1909. A record number of 42 delegates made up the convention that year. A streetcar strike in Philadelphia brought many sore feet and tired limbs.

Ministerial initiative in Epworth League affairs appears to have been questioned by the ministers themselves eventually. At the Boston convention in 1910 Trelstad declined re-election as president and suggested the choice of a layman. Andrew Hansen agreed with Trelstad and explained that in the formative years there was probably a sound reason for utilizing pastoral talent. The 52 delegates first went on record in favor of a layman for president and then proceeded to elect Lars Marum, who was to be of great influence in layman's work in the East for many years. Thereafter no pastor served as president.<sup>33</sup>

At Sunset Park, Brooklyn, in 1911 one of the themes for discussion was "How can tent meetings be of greater usefulness?" Pastors C. W. Hansen and Sophus Norlemann introduced the

<sup>32</sup> An article entitled "Lidt Distrikt Liga Historie" (A bit of District League history) appears in the booklet, *Silver Jubilee Convention of the Norwegian-Danish District Epworth League of the Eastern States*. The article summarizes the meetings from 1904 to 1929. Reports of the first two conventions appeared over Lars Marum's name as secretary in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* of June 16 and December 15, 1904.

<sup>33</sup> Reported by Harald Bach, district secretary, in *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, July 14, 1910.

subject. In the Bronx in 1912 the delegates, 62 in number, considered establishing an immigrant bureau. At Perth Amboy in 1913 Professor John O. Hall lectured on Henrik Ibsen, the internationally known dramatist who had died in 1906. In 1914 at Bethelship a motion to donate the district tent for evangelistic purposes in Norway precipitated a sharp debate.

The largest number of delegates, 79, met at Concord in 1915. A lecture on "Through Yellowstone Park" by one Dr. Dillon Bronson suggests a measure of interest in things both American and beautiful. The war and related circumstances prevented a meeting in 1916. Only 47 delegates were gathered in 1917 at Boston. At Sunset Park in 1918 Mrs. Hans S. Haver read the first paper in the English language at such an occasion. Her theme was "Modern efficiency in Epworth League work." Both the president, Anders Rosenvold, and the secretary, Anders Emile, were on the Western Front. Rosenvold, of Bethelship, was killed in action on November 6, 1918, only five days before the cessation of hostilities.<sup>34</sup>

Emile's letters from France revealed the distaste of a Christian and an artist for the war. He explained to his Sunset Park friends and others that, having come over the Atlantic to America only four years ago, he little thought that now he would be returning to Europe as a soldier. Sensing an early conclusion to the fighting, he stated, "When the trumpet of peace shall sound, I shall gladly embrace every good German (*bra Tysker*). After all, we are brothers and will be spending eternity together." The death-dealing effect of a German artillery shell upon three of his comrades disturbed him deeply. He helped the captain and the chaplain wrap their bodies in their woolen blankets and lower them into French soil. He would hardly forget, he said, these "offerings for militarism." In the same issue of *Østens Missionær* editor Hans S. Haver appealed, as was customary in all journals then, for the success of the Fourth Liberty Loan. The anonymous excerpt ran as follows: "Buy bonds to kill kaiserism; buy bonds to destroy

<sup>34</sup> First to enter military service and first to die of the Epworth Leaguers in the East was Sverre Hansen of Corning. He was killed in combat in France on July 15, 1918. *Østens Missionær*, October 17 and December 19, 1918.

demons; buy bonds to punish Prussianism; buy bonds to vanquish vandals; buy bonds to beat barbarians; back Marshal Foch." <sup>35</sup>

On November 7, 1918, four days prior to the armistice, Emile told of rapid enemy retreat. A scout reported that he had advanced 21 miles and had heard no firing. "We approach a future in which truth and right shall prevail," wrote Emile hopefully. Editor Haver announced Emile's promotion to the grade of captain, which proved to be an error, and also mentioned that not a little criticism had come to the paper on the charge that Emile was pro-German (*Tyskvenlig*). To these personal accusations Emile replied that he had enlisted voluntarily, which he would not have done if he had had faith in the objectives of Germany. He explained further that military authorities had forbidden further promotions, now that the fighting had ceased. At the Epworth League convention of 1919 in Perth Amboy Emile gave a lecture on the war. At this point the record in "A bit of District League history" turned from Norwegian to English, partly the result of the stigma upon the use of foreign languages in the United States and partly because of the needs of an American-born generation of young people. No explanation was given for the change.<sup>36</sup>

Bishop Anton Bast of the Scandinavian Area of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the first Scandinavian (a Dane in this case) to be honored with episcopal election, preached at the convention of 1920 in Bethelship. The year 1921 marked the first convention to be held in Buffalo, farthest inland of the chapters of the East. In Providence in 1923 the district leaguers pledged support to Marie Nilsen of the Boston chapter. Miss Nilsen had completed her preparation for the foreign missionary field. Sponsored by the Woman's Home Missionary Society, she had come to Brooklyn from Norway in 1908 and had joined the Sunset Park Church. Later, in Boston, she heard the missionary call. She studied English in evening school and graduated with honors from a two-year course at Lima Seminary. For three years she attended Boston University. She was one of a class of 52 young ladies ordained as

<sup>35</sup> *Østens Missionær*, June 20, September 5, and October 3, 1918.

<sup>36</sup> *Østens Missionær*, December 19, 1918; January 21 and February 6, 1919.



missionaries in Baltimore in 1922. Her assignment was to Angola, Africa.<sup>37</sup>

At Bethelship in 1924 the Norwegian national holiday, the 17th of May (*syttende mai*), was properly celebrated. Einar Carlsen, ministerial delegate from Norway to the General Conference, was the speaker. The General Conference was then in session in Springfield, Massachusetts. In 1925 Professor Albert C. Knudson spoke in Boston on "Christianity in the light of modern thought." In 1926 the delegates observed an Institute Day, but the leaguers of the East had to wait until the 1930's for an institute, or summer camp, located at Poughkeepsie, New York. The program of 1927 in Baltimore featured a sight-seeing trip to Washington, D.C. The number of delegates was declining. In 1928 there were only 39 at Providence.

The silver jubilee booklet reports also the organization of an Epworth League Inner Mission (*Indre Mission*) in 1911. Its purpose was to raise and apportion funds for the support of the Norwegian-Danish churches in the East. A total of \$9,000 was thus applied prior to 1929. The success of the Inner Mission added luster to the achievements of the young people's organizations.

Limitations of space prevent a detailed treatment of the respective Epworth League chapters. Two were chartered before the first convention of 1904. They were "Eben Ezer" of Bethelship (1893) and "Willerup" of Perth Amboy (1898). Several others chose distinctive names: "Klippen" (The Rock) in Sunset Park, "Progress" in Jersey City, "Elim" in the Central Church of New York, and "Eliezer" in Queens Village, Long Island, also a new field of labor. Naturally, the older and larger chapters contributed more conspicuously to the advance of Norwegian-Danish Methodism, and sometimes of American Methodism. From the Bethelship league came about twenty ministers and other full-time Christian workers. The Perth Amboy chapter took pride in having inspired five of their number to enter the ministry, including Carrie Dixon, a local deaconess. Buffalo had sent out four by 1929, among them Margaret Hansen, who went to China.

<sup>37</sup> K. Tidemann, "Marie Nilsen," in *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 23, 1922.

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It has been mentioned that the East had its own journal, *Østens Missionær*, for nearly eleven years, from February of 1911 to December of 1921. Meeting in Berlin, New Hampshire, in 1910 the preachers decided to publish a weekly paper. Andrew Hansen, then pastor of the Sunset Park congregation, was chosen editor. When Hansen relinquished the pen in 1914, Hans S. Haver relieved him and served until the paper ceased publication. Although *Østens Missionær* was never in debt, it depended partially upon financial assistance from the Methodist Book Concern (now the Methodist Publishing House), receiving during the first years \$600.00 annually. In Haver's time the amount was increased to \$900.00. In fact, the Methodist Book Concern might be said to have owned the paper, as it did *Vidnesbyrdet* in the Far West and *Den Kristelige Talsmand* in the Middle West. A typical copy of *Østens Missionær* in 1918 carries this information: "Published the first and third Thursday each month in Jersey City, New Jersey, by the Methodist Book Concern of New York City. Represented by H. S. Haver, editor and business manager. 50¢ a year."

A glance at a single issue of *Østens Missionær* (February 6, 1919) gives evidence of interest in the world of politics and national affairs. Upon hearing of the death of Theodore Roosevelt editor Haver eulogized the former president as "the country's greatest statesman." Although many thought Roosevelt's criticism of Wilson's wartime administration was unmerciful and unjust, he hastened the peace by many months, according to Haver. Just how the dove of peace arrived earlier because of Roosevelt's staccato outbursts was not explained.

When the Nebraska state legislature ratified the Eighteenth Amendment, for nation-wide prohibition, Haver said the occasion called for a loud hallelujah. Endorsement by the 36th state would go down in history, he believed, as one of the most significant events in the annals of the United States. What the American doughboy had accomplished against German militarism, he continued, the federal and state governments had achieved in capping the long and hard efforts of the temperance forces.

In the final issue of *Østens Missionær* (December 15, 1921) Haver stated that, after seven years at the helm, he must now bid the readers farewell. A merger of the three Norwegian-Danish publications was about to take effect in January of 1922. Haver congratulated P. M. Peterson, editor of the new Midwest weekly, *Evangelisk Tidende*, but reaction in the East was generally one of disappointment, if protests at the preachers' meeting and the Epworth League convention of 1921 are valid criteria. Oddly enough, the merger announcement emanating from the offices of the Methodist Book Concern was made in the preachers' meeting of 1921 at Berlin, New Hampshire, the very place where in 1910 the decision for publishing *Østens Missionær* had been made.<sup>38</sup>

The Norwegian-Danish Mission replaced the Eastern District in 1924. An invitation to unite with the Norwegian-Danish Conference was declined. The new status required annual meetings with a bishop in the chair. Reports by Ottar Hofstad, superintendent of the mission, were of necessity given in English for the first time, to accommodate the bishops. In 1927 Hofstad, who served Jersey City concurrently, reported gains in mission membership for the interval of three years since 1924. His report of 1928 was equally encouraging, with special praise for work with seamen in Baltimore and Bethelship. Statistics revealed a total of 1,347 members, an increase of 32 during the year, and a Sunday school enrollment of approximately 1,500.<sup>39</sup>

In the General Conference of 1928 the Eastern mission was granted permission to dissolve and the Norwegian-Danish Conference was permitted to extend its boundaries to the Atlantic Coast. In 1930 the mission thus became the Eastern District of the conference. In his first report as district superintendent Hofstad described in detail the strength and coverage of the work in the East.<sup>40</sup> Long Island, he believed, was a new field, partly owing to

<sup>38</sup> *Jubilæums Aarbog*, 70.

<sup>39</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1924), 14. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Mission in the Eastern States (1927 and 1928). In 1926 the *Aarbog* had appeared as a *Year Book*. No explanation was given for the shift back to Norwegian in 1927.

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1930), 23-25. Hofstad reported 14 preaching points, 1,400 members, 1,600 Sunday school pupils, and 700 Epworth Leaguers.

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removals from Bethelship, Sunset Park, and other churches. The Baltimore church, he said, was mainly for sailors, 2,000 of whom had been contacted during the year. The pastor residing there, C. F. Nilsen, had opened an office for the purpose of placing men on ships.

By 1934 four churches—Jersey City, Perth Amboy, Queens Village, and Boston—had withdrawn from the expanded Norwegian-Danish Conference and had joined American conferences. So it was confirmed by C. J. Conrad who, as district superintendent, intimated that the consolidation with the Norwegian Danish Conference of the Middle West had been unpopular among the easterners and that now many of them felt free to leave the Scandinavian connection altogether.<sup>41</sup>

The Norwegian-Danish Conference met in annual session in 1935 in Sunset Park Church, Brooklyn. Bishop Edwin Holt Hughes, highly regarded in Scandinavian circles, presided over this the 56th session, the first to be held in the East. A thinning of the ranks perhaps had the effect of reviving the singing of long-familiar Norwegian hymns, such as “Lær mig at kjende dine veie” (Teach me to know thy ways) and “Kom, velsignelsesnes kilde” (Come, thou fount of every blessing). The Sunset Park choir, known over the years for its outstanding direction and quality, sang “Og jeg saa en ny himmel” (And I saw a new heaven). At the Sunday morning service of worship, before the benediction was pronounced, the congregation joined in the singing of “Den himmelske lovsang” (The heavenly anthem), a hymn that had come to be identified as the “glory song” of the conference, by bishops and others. It was a moment filled with deep emotion. In 1938 Bishop Ernest Lynn Waldorf, frequently chairman of the Norwegian-Danish annual sessions, announced the transfer of the Concord church from the New England Conference back to the Norwegians and Danes. But the loss of Bethelship to the New York East Conference more than offset the Concord gain.<sup>42</sup>

Time was running out for separate Norwegian-Danish activity

<sup>41</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1934), 26.

<sup>42</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1938), 14.



in the East, as well as in the Middle West and the Far West. In circulation were rumors of a merger of three large Methodist denominations: the Methodist Protestant Church of America, the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Episcopal Church of the north. The hard times of the 1930's, the all but complete cessation of immigration since the act of 1924 established a quota system, and the declining support of the once foreign-language work with mission funds combined to discourage further independent efforts in the East.

All was not hopeless in 1938, however, when superintendent P. M. Peterson spoke for the Eastern District. "In spite of discrimination," said he, "we have made better progress than the church as a whole, since the district was organized." Omitting the transferred Bethelship from his figures, Peterson pointed out that there had been a gain of 200 members since 1925. "In benevolences we have dropped nearly 60%, but even there we are in advance of the church as a whole. In the same period of time the missionary appropriation for the district has been reduced over 80%. In 1925 we received \$8,570. Last year we received \$1,400." For the last time, in 1939, pastors and lay delegates from the East met in Trinity, Racine, as members of the Norwegian-Danish Conference. The Uniting Conference of May, 1939, had already set up boundaries for a new North Central Jurisdiction, which would exclude the distant easterners. Its own days to end in 1943, the Norwegian-Danish Conference adopted a resolution expressing regrets over the separation after nine pleasant years together and invoking God's blessing upon the departing brethren in their continued labors.<sup>43</sup>

Geographical, social, and national factors tended to make Norwegians and Danes in the East more conscious, in the first instance, of their Scandinavian heritage, but ultimately those factors spelled the end of separate Norwegian-Danish activity within the Methodist communion. Close proximity to Europe, and the constant flow of immigrants into and beyond New York, kept the old loyalties alive. With energetic youth arriving regularly from

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1938), 29 and (1939), 24.

abroad, Norwegiandom had an excellent chance to flourish; for a time. Nor did the New Immigration from southern and eastern Europe do much to dissipate consciousness of nationality among the Norwegians. On the contrary, the Norsemen were only further driven in on themselves through uninvited pressures from without, first in the form of nativism and Protestant Americanism and later in the form of immigrant Roman Catholicism, especially in the urban centers. But Americanism, accentuated by the spirit of the First World War, eventually provided the amalgam in which so-called un-American cultures, including the Scandinavian, were absorbed.

At one time confused with their Swedish brethren, Norwegians and Danes came to form distinctive congregations in Brooklyn and Perth Amboy, the forerunners of a dozen or so twentieth century societies scattered thinly over the states of New York and New Jersey and throughout southern New England. While it is difficult to assess with accuracy the influences bearing upon the Eastern mission as a whole, lying as it did astride the path from Christiania to Chicago, it is certain that the Midwest pioneers and their successors inspired in large measure the founding as well as the fostering of congregations in the East. One conspicuous evidence would be the longtime dissemination of news and opinion from the more centrally located Norwegian-Danish Conference to its eastern outposts through the medium of the official weekly publication, *Den Kristelige Talsmand*.

## *Den Kristelige Talsmand Speaks*

IN COMMON WITH OTHER foreign-speaking groups and with other denominations, Norwegian-Danish Methodists in America early saw the need of a religious journal of their own. Such a publication could serve many useful purposes. In view of the vast geographical spread of the mission to the immigrants, a weekly paper would help to bind the far-flung units together. As the voice of Methodism for Scandinavians of more or less recent conversion, Norwegian and Danish editors of the generation following the Civil War expounded upon moral problems, to some extent attributable to the postwar letdown. Sharp rebuttals to Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Mormon, and Adventist theological arguments filled the editorial columns from time to time. And, of course, news from the old communities in Norway and Denmark and from the growing number of congregations in America was of publication value in itself.

Norwegians and Danes of Methodist connection had, beginning in 1870, an organ specifically suited to their needs and interests. *Missionaeren* (The Missionary) was succeeded by *Den Christelige Talsmand* (The Christian Advocate) in 1877.<sup>1</sup> The *Talsmand* was followed in turn by *Evangelisk Tidende* (Evangelical News) from 1922 to 1940, when it became *The Gospel Advocate*. In 1943, when the Norwegian-Danish Conference was dissolved, publication of the unofficial *Fellowship News Bulletin* began. All of the periodicals were published in Chicago.

Andrew Haagensen and John Henry Johnson were induced to begin publication of the monthly *Missionaeren* in January of 1870. Assisting in 1871 was Karl Schou, who soon departed for the mission in Denmark. Christian Treider aided Haagensen in the

<sup>1</sup> As previously mentioned, the spelling was changed to *Kristelige*, probably in January of 1904, to conform with the newer practice in Norway. Unfortunately, a number of volumes are missing. None are available for the years 1877, 1886-88, 1892-97, 1899, and 1901-03.

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early months of 1873, until Haagensen asked to be relieved because of ill health. Treider then carried the editorial responsibility until the final issue in December of 1876.<sup>2</sup>

*Den Christelige Talsmand* was initiated as a four-page weekly of full newspaper size on January 4, 1877. The Methodist Book Concern gave some financial assistance. Treider and Haagensen edited this journal intermittently between them during the first years. Published every Tuesday from its Chicago offices, the original subscription rate was \$1.60 a year. The *Talsmand* was ably edited over the years by the following pastors:

Christian Treider .....	1877-80
Andrew Haagensen .....	1880-84
Christian Treider .....	1884-91
Andrew Haagensen .....	1891-98
Carl Frederick Eltzholtz .....	1898-1905
Hans Peter Bergh .....	1905-08
Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen .....	1908-14
Carl Andreas Andersen .....	1914-19
Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen .....	1919-20
Peter M. Peterson .....	1920-22

The first offices of *Den Christelige Talsmand* were located at 119 West Indiana Street, later known as Grand Avenue. The issue of January 5, 1878, announced a change of address to 157 West Indiana Street. In 1880 a brick building was constructed for the purpose of a combined bookstore and editorial office on the corner of Grand Avenue and Sangamon Street. A larger piece of property was purchased in 1890 on the corner of Grand and Racine Avenues for \$10,800. In 1893 the office was again moved, this time to 272-274 West Indiana Street. In 1911 bookstore and all were moved from 1159 Grand Avenue to 3634 West Fullerton Avenue on Chicago's northwest side, toward which many Scandinavians were gravitating. Shortly thereafter the new address became 3646, in the same block on Fullerton Avenue. In Septem-

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Haagensen, *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider af Havet* (Chicago, 1894), 158. A number of details are confirmed by Carl Frederick Eltzholtz in the *Talsmand* of January 4, 1900, when he published several articles from *Missionaeren* of January and February, 1870.



ber, 1915, a Norwegian-Danish department was set up at 1018 South Wabash Avenue, then the home of the Methodist Book Concern. By June of 1916 the familiar 740 North Rush Street, the Chicago office of the Methodist Book Concern, became the permanent and final address.<sup>3</sup>

One who scans an early copy of *Den Christelige Talsmand*, of Christian Treider's time, would find sermons, theological discussions, and the international Sunday school lessons on the front page. There would be miscellaneous news items here and there, with a wide variety of advertisements interspersed. Among other items, reed organs and steamship travel rates found place among the ads. Elgin watches were advertised on sale for \$12.00. Allen's Lung Balsam, containing no opium, claimed to be good for colds, bronchitis, and all lung ailments. The Chicago and Northwestern Railroad, with 2,100 miles of track, had no competitor between Chicago and Council Bluffs, Iowa. Pullman hotel cars were available. A time table accompanied the ad.<sup>4</sup>

Treider took occasion to designate the kind of material most acceptable for publication. It would include, in addition to religious articles and church news, social and political items, bits of news from Scandinavia, correspondence from subscribers, helpful hints for house and farm, and the latest information on the markets. He made known that countrymen who wished to locate relatives or friends, or those who wanted to inform others of their addresses, could employ the services of the *Talsmand* gratis.<sup>5</sup> Religious novels in serial form also appeared regularly in this pioneer journal. Between 1878 and 1883 the paper ran Hesba Stretton's *Livets Storme* (The Storms of Life), J. H. Ingraham's *Fyrsten af Davids Hus* (The Prince of the House of David) as well as his

<sup>3</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, September 14, 1911; September 2, 1915; June 1, 1916.

<sup>4</sup> See the issue of January 1, 1878 (Volume 9, number 1), the first issue available to the present writer. Volume numbering was continuous from the beginning of *Missionaeren* in 1870. Existing volumes of the *Talsmand* are now filed in the library of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois.

<sup>5</sup> January 7 and February 4, 1879. In the issue of February 12, 1878, Treider announced the arrival of the first two issues of *Kristelige Tidende* (Christian News), the new organ for Methodism in Norway. Unless otherwise indicated, footnoted dates in this chapter will refer to particular issues of *Den Kristelige Talsmand*.

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*Ildstøtten* (The Pillar of Fire), and, by an anonymous author, *Udaf Løvens Mund* (Out of the Mouth of the Lion).

During his first years with the *Talsmand* Treider took note of the course of events, domestic and foreign, and passed judgment on public issues. Tribute was paid to King Victor Emmanuel of Italy upon his death in 1878, the monarch being identified with reform. Treider soliloquized on the future of the United States, a country which according to predictions of statisticians would one day be able to feed ten billion people! Here men had the best opportunities, thought Treider, where medieval prejudices, distinctions of nationality, and denominational bitterness were obliterated. But it was hardly enough, he said, to have only the external obstacles removed. He joined with fellow Scandinavian editors of Chicago in denouncing the hold of "certain thieves and robbers" upon the Republican party, a party generally supported by the immigrants from Norway and Denmark. He appealed to the Scandinavians of Cook County, or Chicago and its hinterland, to support candidates of their own blood for public office, not many having been elected in recent years.<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that under Treider's guidance the *Talsmand* served not simply as a vehicle of church news but to a considerable extent analyzed the political and international scenes. He sympathized with the woman's rights movement, far from popular at that time, and suggested that it was hampered by the extravagance and sensationalism of its brazen leaders. He deplored cheap political strife and stated that the time was at hand for competent and high-minded men to take control. In return for the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution, Christians ought to do more for their country. The hard times of 1873-78 were caused by loose handling of money, traceable in turn to lack of moral fiber. Not an outward change of the American system was required, said Treider, but an inner cleansing. He blamed neither Republicans nor Democrats for the corruption incident to the disputed Hayes-Tilden election of 1876. He simply urged his fellow Scandinavians to go to the

<sup>6</sup> January 22, 1878; March 22 and October 27, 1879. The other papers whose editors signed the appeal were *Hemlandet*, *Skandinaven*, *Svenska Tribunen*, *Norden*, *Svenska Amerikanaren*, *Verdens Gang*, and *Chicago Bladet*.

polls in 1878 and 1880. The alleged coarseness of Thomas Nast's cartoons he defended on the grounds that Nast could not well use silk gloves when fighting "lustful interests." Democratic victories in Chicago's municipal elections failed to disappoint Treider. Committed to neither party exclusively, he feared that the Republicans had been in office so long that they had lost the feeling of responsibility to the electorate.<sup>7</sup>

In the wake of the railroad strikes of 1877, commonly attributed to socialistic labor unions, Treider displayed an uncommon fortitude in befriending "honest socialists." For the American public schools he had a good word. He appreciated the freedom of the press, favored James A. Garfield slightly over Winfield S. Hancock in 1880, found satisfaction in Bismarck's attempt to curb the political influence of Roman Catholicism in the Prussian *Kulturkampf*, questioned the dogma of papal infallibility, acclaimed the world exposition in Paris in 1878 as a means toward promoting the oneness of mankind, and deplored the low morality of high diplomacy in the Congress of Berlin in 1878.<sup>8</sup>

Treider reassured his readers that great philosophers like Fichte, Hegel, and Kant, unlike the agnostic Robert G. Ingersoll, were men of deep religious conviction. "A Glance at Adventism," by O. P. Petersen, appeared in serial form. While Treider's editorials were varied in scope and at times liberal in content, they reflected the views of a substantial number of subscribers on matters pertaining to this world as well as to the next.<sup>9</sup>

The General Conference of 1880, while it authorized the organization of the Northwest Norwegian Conference, also decided that the *Talsmand* should be financially sustained by the Tract Society and by the Methodist Book Concern. Fortunately, the annual deficits were not large. For the year 1879-80 an indebtedness of only \$70.53 had been incurred. Receipts for the year were \$4,057.56. Disbursements amounted to \$4,128.09. Paid subscriptions numbered 2,203. Complimentary subscriptions to prisons,

<sup>7</sup> March 26, June 11, June 25, July 2, and November 5, 1878; January 28, 1879.

<sup>8</sup> January 1, January 29, May 7, and July 23, 1878; April 8, July 29, September 30, and October 28, 1879; July 20 and August 3, 1880.

<sup>9</sup> May 6; September 16, 23, and 30; October 28; November 4, 1879.

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hospitals, and seamen's missions reached a figure of 144, making a total of 2,347.<sup>10</sup>

Andrew Haagenzen graced his editorial debut in 1880 with characteristic steadiness and tolerance. He hoped to continue to publish theological discussions. They must, however, be in the spirit of love and of sincere inquiry. He was not narrowly Methodist, he explained. "Members of other denominations," said he, "worship the same God and the same Christ."<sup>11</sup> His expressed tolerance, it might be said, was scarcely universal in the religious press of the nineteenth century.

On one occasion a correspondent from Forest City, Iowa, informed Haagenzen of a rumor to the effect that the *Talsmand* was a money-making venture. This he found it a bit difficult to believe, he admitted, yet he would like an explanation. While ignoring the monetary charge, Haagenzen replied that at one time Lutheran attacks found his people defenseless, without an organ of their own.<sup>12</sup> No doubt one of the original purposes of the *Talsmand* was to counteract the influence of Norwegian Lutheran publications.

Most of the correspondents, and there were many in Haagenzen's time, had other motives than to heckle or to criticize. Sometimes out of sheer loneliness a reader would seek solace in pen and ink. One such person wrote from Dakota Territory, "Since I know that there are brothers and sisters who would like to hear from me, and I have seen in your paper that you also accept correspondence from women, I ask a place for a few lines."<sup>13</sup> Within a single month (January, 1883) no less than thirteen points of the compass were heard from. They ranged from Brooklyn, New York, to East Portland, Oregon, and from Bayfield, Wisconsin, on the shores of Lake Superior, to New Orleans, Louisiana.

In 1883 the *Talsmand* was enlarged to an eight-page paper, but with smaller pages. In December of that year appeared, for the

<sup>10</sup> June 1, 1880. *Minutes*. Northwest Norwegian Conference (1880), 25.

<sup>11</sup> September 28, 1880.

<sup>12</sup> October 5, 1881.

<sup>13</sup> February 21, 1883. Letter dated January 31, 1883, from Mrs. R. C. Saltvold, Garfield, Walsh County, Dakota Territory.



first time, the sub-title *The Christian Advocate* (in English), together with a declaration of purpose reading, "Devoted to Religion and General Intelligence." The next concession in deference to the eye and the hand came in 1904, when under Eltzholtz the paper was increased to sixteen pages, the pages again being reduced in size. Apparently the spelling of *Christelige* was changed then also.<sup>14</sup>

Treider's first remarks, addressed to contributors, were headed *Vaer Kort* (Be Brief). "Long visits," he advised, "long newspaper articles, long historical accounts, long lectures, long admonitions, and long prayers seldom benefit those who indulge in them. Life is short. Time is short. Life's moments are valuable. Learn to condense, shorten, and specify."<sup>15</sup> Good advice, even if Treider did not need to be so repetitious in his plea for condensation!

Treider's interests in political and social questions shone again. His views covered a wide range, from temperance to Christian Socialism. He regretted that in 1885 in the larger cities of Wisconsin an election failed to raise saloon license fees from \$200 to \$500. He declared that not even German pastors and church-goers could be counted upon to shake the throne of King Barleycorn. His criticism was unfair to German Methodists who, if they followed the lead of their official paper, *Der Christliche Apologete* (The Christian Apologist), crusaded consistently against *König Alkohol*. The death of Ulysses S. Grant brought to Treider the satisfaction that the Methodist ritual was used at the funeral service. There was no suggestion of the scandals of the administration of the post-war president. Referring to the mid-century Christian Socialism of Charles Kingsley and Frederick Maurice in England. Treider gave warning on the threshold of the panic of 1893 that big business was swallowing up the little man. Would it be Jay Gould, or socialism in the spirit of Christ? he asked.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Haagensen, 159. December 5, 1883, and January 7, 1904.

<sup>15</sup> October 8, 1884. Treider introduced the first index, covering 52 issues in 1889 (December 31, 1889).

<sup>16</sup> August 12 and September 30, 1885; January 13, 1891. Paul F. Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism: Biography of an Immigrant Soul* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1939), 67 and 237.

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Advertisements met with mixed response among the ministers. Some thought them unworthy of a church periodical. Others felt that a reduction in their number would leave more space for news and discussion. Treider defended his practice, claiming that many readers liked the ads. Least objectionable were the items announcing steamship and railroad rates and opportunities to obtain land in the West. The Inman Line, with the "largest, fastest, and most elegant ships in the world," boasted a record of five days, nineteen hours, and eighteen minutes from America to Scandinavia. A North Dakota correspondent might as well have been an advertiser. After speaking of the good soil, the remarkable water, and the cheap coal (lignite) at a dollar a ton, she suggested, "Anyone interested in taking up land may contact Mr. Lawson Nelson of Minneapolis, agent for the Soo Line. The Soo Line does much for the settlers. They provide free travel and later half price when the settlers move in." In 1904 the Northern Pacific Railroad advertised new low rates for homeseekers under the caption: "There is land still left in the Northwest."<sup>17</sup>

More objectionable were the miraculous claims made for certain products, such as "the best electric belt in the world," guaranteed to cure, without medicine, the following: rheumatism, catarrh, asthma, neuralgia, constipation, heart failure, paralysis, nervousness, kidney ailments, sleeplessness, and cold feet.<sup>18</sup>

Treider announced his intention to take a rest in June of 1891. Haagensen promptly relieved him in September, after an absence of seven years from the editorship. Haagensen in turn completed his *Talsmand* experience in 1898, yielding to Carl Frederick Eltzholtz by conference vote. His word of farewell commended Eltzholtz as one who had published a successful temperance paper in Denmark.<sup>19</sup>

Public affairs continued to elicit comments from the editors. The Spanish-American War and its consequences were cited.

<sup>17</sup> May 20 and August 5, 1890; January 7, 1904. It may be of interest to note that in 1907 the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference moved to reject patent medicine ads from *Vidnesbyrdet*, the official journal of the conference.

<sup>18</sup> January 4, 1898.

<sup>19</sup> June 2 and September 22, 1891; September 13, 1898.

Haagensen refused to believe that the Spaniards sank the battleship *Maine* in Havana harbor. The explosion was accidental, he assumed, notwithstanding the emotional anti-Spanish outbursts of Theodore Roosevelt, then assistant secretary of the navy. Years later, in 1911, editor Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen hinted that the Spaniards had laid a mine. An American naval inquiry of that year had come to the conclusion that the explosion was external, the ship's plates having been blown inward. But no proof of guilt was ever established.<sup>20</sup>

Haagensen went along with the professed altruism of American policy with reference to the Cubans. "A less selfish and more justified war had probably never been fought," he declared. He and many fellow Americans were unaware of Spain's belated willingness to grant self-government to the islanders, stopping short of war.<sup>21</sup>

With the war spirit Eltzholtz appears also to have been affected, with hopes of evangelizing the newly acquired colonial peoples. "The Lord seems to have destined this country," he wrote, "to be a pioneer in so many ways—especially in matters pertaining to freedom, education, invention and discovery, and foreign missions." He advocated self-government for the Filipinos as soon as they gave evidence of their readiness for it. He feared, however, the prevailing influence and property ownership of Roman Catholicism in the Philippines. At a later day Wilhelmsen protested a United States government order forbidding public school teachers in the Philippines to discuss Protestantism, even outside the classroom.<sup>22</sup>

In 1900 Eltzholtz reminded his readers that the *Talsmand* was not a political paper, when a few pressed him to show his colors in the McKinley-Bryan presidential campaign. The election returns drew from him this brief noncommittal statement: "McKinley has been re-elected." By 1904 his reticence had ceased, at least to the extent that he approved of Theodore Roosevelt's elec-

<sup>20</sup> February 22, 1898, and December 21, 1911. The sinking occurred on February 15, 1898.

<sup>21</sup> April 26, 1898.

<sup>22</sup> November 8 and December 6, 1898; April 19, 1900; November 16, 1911.

tion. The chief executive had shown that he knew how to select capable advisers, in the opinion of Eltzholtz. At the time of Roosevelt's inauguration Eltzholtz called attention to his valor as leader of the Rough Riders in the late war. With countless Americans who believed this exaggerated story, Eltzholtz declared, "Where the bullets were thickest, there was his place."<sup>23</sup>

Like the bespectacled president himself, Eltzholtz found comfort in Japan's defeat of Russia in 1905. The Russian bear, he opined, had received a well deserved cuff in its designs upon Manchuria. It disturbed him to learn, however, that at one stage in the fighting several hundred Japanese infantrymen had been shot down in barbed wire, an American invention.<sup>24</sup>

Eltzholtz in his first issue proposed to inform the reading constituency on many and diverse matters, as shown in his prospectus for the year 1899. These were some anticipated articles: "God's providence in nature," "The war with Spain and its lessons," "Missionary activity in India" (Eltzholtz had a sister serving as a missionary there), "The marriage of Christians to ungodly persons," "Mormonism," "Conditions in the Philippines," and "Preachers' salaries." F. B. Meyer's explanation of the Letter to the Hebrews would continue. Beginning immediately there would appear a story entitled, "Titus, a follower of the cross." Former editor Treider, now agent for the *Talsmand*, would do his utmost to make the publication a financial success.<sup>25</sup>

The zeal of Eltzholtz for temperance extended beyond spirituous liquors to chewing gum and cigarettes. He warned gum-chewing young ladies that over-exercise of certain facial muscles would lead to distortion. Citing the high percentage (90%) of smokers among the men rejected for military service in the Spanish-American War, he concluded glumly, "Either the cigarette or our general progress as a people must give way." Under the caption "No more birds on hats" he feared extermination of the feathered

<sup>23</sup> November 1 and 8, 1900; November 17, 1904; March 2, 1905.

<sup>24</sup> June 15 and August 10, 1905. Barbed wire was invented by Joseph F. Glidden, a farmer of DeKalb, Illinois, in 1874.

<sup>25</sup> December 27, 1898.



creatures by vain and unthinking womenfolk and gave his support to the American Ornithological Union.<sup>26</sup>

Eltzholtz kept one foot in Denmark. The summer of 1904 found him in Europe. Upon resuming his duties in Chicago he spoke out against certain practices that annoyed him. Sunday school children were leaving the church noisily after dismissal. Church programs were being applauded with hand-clapping, and the pastor was not always informed of the nature of programs beforehand. There were lengthy reports of surprise parties submitted to him. With all of this he was displeased. Whether he had observed a particular reverence for the church in Europe and regretted the contrast with American ways is not stated.<sup>27</sup>

Over a period of a decade a difference of opinion concerning the propriety of publishing market information and agricultural advice arose. While Eltzholtz made known in 1900 that market prices would be published for the benefit of farmers, James Sanaker stated in 1910, "Everything that savors of agriculture should be strictly excluded from our paper. It spells death for our work."<sup>28</sup>

Eltzholtz and Hans Peter Bergh turned the *Talsmand* to an admonitory use by denouncing the secular obeisance to Santa Claus. Eltzholtz questioned the custom of deceiving children in homes and Sunday schools. "The time will soon come," he warned, "when children's faith in the words of their parents will be shaken." Bergh complained, with good reason, that the bearded gentleman of good cheer had "crowded out our precious Saviour" in the celebration of Christmas. Such worship of a "saint" was more befitting a Roman Catholic festival, he believed. Bergh found welcome confirmation of his views when *Budbaereren* (The Messenger), organ of the Hauge Synod, joined him in the assault on St. Nicholas. Bergh's final word on the subject was uttered in 1913 when, as a contributor, he inquired whether a stranger to American ways would not identify Santa Claus as the honored

<sup>26</sup> February 1, May 10, and July 19, 1900.

<sup>27</sup> November 24 and December 1, 1904.

<sup>28</sup> September 20, 1900. Sanaker for the Minneapolis District in *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1910), 34; his idiomatic words were: "Døden i Gryden."

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guest at most Christmas parties.<sup>29</sup>

In the years from 1907 to 1914 the role of the United States in world affairs received occasional comment in the editorial columns. Bergh gave expression to the hope that the second Hague Conference (1907), called at the suggestion of Theodore Roosevelt, would eventuate in peace. While the first Hague Conference (1899) was followed by the bloody Russo-Japanese War, now he thought that biblical prophecy of a warless world was being fulfilled.<sup>30</sup>

With words that reflected the exuberance of a convert, Eltzholtz extolled the accomplishments of the United States on the Fourth of July in 1909. He declared that Uncle Sam had taught the nations of the earth how to conduct diplomatic relations in an honorable fashion. The late secretary of state, John Hay, had won lasting distinction in that respect, it was said. Eltzholtz thanked God that the United States sat as "a wise and youthful queen among the gray-haired and moss-grown nations," bringing vitality to all peoples with a new freedom-loving spirit.<sup>31</sup>

Eltzholtz rarely minced words. In 1912 he combined a cautionary word with a glowing tribute when he wrote, "If America will continue to observe the day of rest, an open Bible, a non-sectarian school system, an unprejudiced judiciary, free and unfettered right of voting, together with the peculiarly American institutions that lift America high above other lands and make it such a desirable country in which to live, then it will for a long time remain a promised land for the world's poor and oppressed peoples." <sup>32</sup> It would appear that his words were pointed toward the presidential campaign, in which political and social reform programs were advanced by all parties.

Two activities related to the editorial chores were the publication of *Hyrdestemmen* (The Shepherd's Voice), intended mainly for Sunday school children, and the management of a bookstore.

<sup>29</sup> December 22, 1904; November 21, 1907; December 18, 1913.

<sup>30</sup> May 2, 1907.

<sup>31</sup> July 1, 1909.

<sup>32</sup> May 30, 1912.

*Hyrdestemmen* began as a semi-monthly in 1876. Edited jointly by Treider and Eltzholtz originally, it became the responsibility of the *Talsmand* editor after 1878, when Eltzholtz was appointed to the mission in Denmark. In 1887 *Hyrdestemmen* appeared as a weekly but in smaller format. In 1893 it was enlarged and received its own editor, separate from the *Talsmand*, in the person of Bergh. Bergh found himself in the midst of a rather long career in religious journalism. Upon leaving the *Talsmand* office in 1908 he recalled that he was the first editor of the Methodist Sunday school paper in Norway. For six years he had edited *Kristelig Tidende* (Christian News), the old country counterpart to the *Talsmand*. For a total of eleven years *Hyrdestemmen* was guided by his tender and conservative hand. From 1905 to 1908 both the *Talsmand* and *Hyrdestemmen* were his responsibility. By decision of the annual conference *Hyrdestemmen* underwent another enlargement in 1911. There was to be one full page in English, and Sunday school lessons were to appear bilingually. In the new order of things Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen was to be assisted by O. L. Hansen.<sup>33</sup>

The Norwegian-Danish Book Store, operated in conjunction with the *Talsmand*, antedated the conference itself by four years. In 1876 there came into being *Den Norsk-Danske Forlagsboghandel*, following the recommendation of a committee. Pastors and interested laymen contributed the initial funds by purchasing shares in what was a private corporation, for the time being. Various laymen served as managers of the store until the conference voted in 1882 in favor of the editors assuming the management, without additional salary. In the earlier years the editor received portions of his annual salary from the Methodist Book Concern (\$500) and from the Tract Society (\$300).<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> October 1, 1908 and September 21, 1911. Haagensen, 159. The bilingual feature appealed to Eltzholtz, joint editor with Treider when *Hyrdestemmen* began publication in 1876. Writing from Cambridge, Wisconsin in 1912 he stated that he had seen Sunday school children take the paper home with them. *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, July 11, 1912.

<sup>34</sup> Haagensen, *Historie*, 154-158. Hans C. Munson, "The Norwegian-Danish Publishing Society," in *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 67; historical section. Munson states that later the Methodist Book Concern gave \$1,400 annually.

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In 1881 the bookstore became the property of the theological seminary in Evanston. In 1890 the Norwegian-Danish Publishing Society was incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois, the incorporation papers specifying that the business should be run for the benefit of the theological school. At the same time Conrad Hansen, a layman, was named manager by the directors. The annual conference of 1890 set up a nine-man committee to study the matter of a permanent location. Four members preferred moving to Minneapolis, but five favored remaining in Chicago. In 1901 the conference decided to move both the bookstore and the *Talsmand* office to St. Paul, Minnesota. The move never took place.<sup>35</sup>

Advertised in 1890 were a number of books by O. P. Petersen, Andrew Haagensen, and others. Petersen's works included *Aabenbaringens Egentlige Mening om det Tusindaarige Rige* (The Meaning of the Millenium According to the Book of Revelation), *Daabslæren i et Nøddeskal* (The Doctrine of Baptism in a Nut-shell!), *Et Blik paa Adventismen* (A Glance at Adventism), and *Nogle Tanker om Guds Alvidenhed* (Some Thoughts on the Omniscience of God). Haagensen authored a *Bibelhistorie* (Bible History), *Methodismens og Lutheranismens Virkelige Ligheder og Uligheder* (The Real Similarities and Differences Between Methodism and Lutheranism), and *Religiøse Fortaellinger fra Store og Gode Maends Liv og Virksomhed* (Religious Tales from the Lives and Works of Great and Good Men). The list included John H. Johnson's *Vaekkelsespraedikener* (Revival Sermons), Dwight L. Moody's *Bibelske Skildringer* (Biblical Portrayals), John Bunyan's *Vaerker* (Works), John Fletcher's *Christelig Fuldkommenhed* (Christian Perfection), T. B. Hawley's *Methodismens Haandbog* (Handbook of Methodism), and a Scandinavian-American cookbook.<sup>36</sup>

Manager Hansen reported in 1893 that after seventeen years in operation the book enterprise had assets of \$23,536, itemized in

<sup>35</sup> Hans Peter Bergh, *Femtihaarsskrift* (Chicago, 1901), 66. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1890), 12 and (1901), 13.

<sup>36</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1890), 38.



part as follows:<sup>37</sup> two buildings and lots, \$10,800; books on hand, \$6,274.50; electrotype plates, \$2,235; accounts receivable, \$3,352; and a printing press, \$700. From the press had come a pocket Bible and two hymnals.

By way of contrast, book titles of some years later (1911) showed a trend toward the English and toward lighter and more varied reading. There was a young people's life of Christ, a Sunday school speaker's guide, several books on animal life and on Indians, brief biographies of famous men and women, the lives of the American presidents, thrilling sea stories, and an account of Theodore Roosevelt's "marvelous exploits" in the wilds of Africa. All of these were advertised in the *Talsmand* as dollar books on sale for 45¢.<sup>38</sup>

Bookstore managers served long and faithfully. Bergh began in 1900 and was relieved by O. L. Hansen in 1905. The assistant editorship of the *Talsmand* was an additional task, while for many years the *Talsmand* office also sold steamship tickets, for the Norwegian-America Line. At times orders were accepted for coal and wood and for moving of household goods. Carl A. Andersen succeeded Hansen as manager and assistant editor in 1912.<sup>39</sup>

Theodore Roosevelt stood high in the estimation of editor Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen. Distrusting the leadership of the new chief executive, William Howard Taft, in 1909, Wilhelmsen cast a wistful glance backward. Theodore Roosevelt, he stated, was regarded by many as the best president in the history of the country, with the exception of Washington and Lincoln. Three times the sage of Sagamore had brought honor to the nation. He had hastened construction of the Panama Canal. He had mediated between Russia and Japan. And he had ordered the American fleet on a world cruise. Recalling perhaps that the genial Taft had once been special envoy to the Pope, Wilhelmsen resented Taft's addressing the students of a Jesuit college in New Orleans and congratulating them upon their choice of an institution.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1893), 27.

<sup>38</sup> November 2, 1911.

<sup>39</sup> October 3, 1912.

<sup>40</sup> December 16, 1909.

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Wilhelmsen was later pleased to praise the authorities in Washington, D.C., for their magnanimous decision to return a substantial portion of the Chinese indemnity from the Boxer Revolt. The proposal to set up a fund for the education of Chinese youth in American colleges and universities he pronounced most commendable. Faith was expressed in Sun Yat-sen, founder of the newly born Chinese republic. Wilhelmsen, though of Danish blood, took pleasure in reporting that Roald Amundsen had discovered the South Pole on December 14, 1911. A great honor, he said, had come to the Norwegian people.<sup>41</sup>

Other evidence of the editor's awareness of the passing social and political scenes appeared in his reference to the First Balkan War, his defense of the Negro race in America in connection with charges of criminal tendencies, and his regretful announcement of the death of Danish-born Jacob Riis, bosom friend of Theodore Roosevelt and nationally known author of *How the Other Half Lives*. The war of 1913 between Turkey and four of her Balkan neighbors Wilhelmsen described as a struggle between Mohammedanism and Christianity.<sup>42</sup> The curtain-raising role of the Balkan wars, leading to a titanic European holocaust, was difficult to perceive.

On the business side, the subscription rate of the *Talsmand* underwent a few changes. From the \$1.50 of 1905 it was reduced to \$1.00 in 1912, only to be raised again to \$1.50 in 1917 with the higher operating costs of the First World War. Sale of steamship tickets brought additional income. Relatives in the United States were urged to secure passage for their kinfolk abroad through the office of the *Talsmand*.<sup>43</sup>

Through the regular visits of *Den Kristelige Talsmand* the Norwegian-Danish branch of a great American Protestant denomination found an invaluable bond of union and spiritual guidance. Not yet had the more sensational metropolitan newspaper, primarily a commercial venture, nudged the religious press to an inferior place in the living room. Editorials replete with pastoral

<sup>41</sup> March 14, 1912.

<sup>42</sup> October 31, 1912.

<sup>43</sup> September 21, 1905; November 28, 1912; November 16, 1916.

concern for strengthening the inner life were genuinely appreciated. No doubt the scarcity of telephones, the absence of automobiles, and the total non-existence of radios postponed the day when the home would be invaded with matters of mundane and temporal import. Wires and tires were not yet rulers of the day. Upon the threshold of the First World War, and at the peak of Norwegian-Danish Methodist strength, the *Talsmand* was enjoying its maximum influence. Yet the foreign-language press, however patriotic in its professions, was shortly to fall victim to restrictive government wartime directives and to no small amount of popular mistrust engendered by nationalistic intolerance.

## *Patriotism Runs High*

WITH THE UNDERLYING CAUSES and events leading up to the European war in 1914 few Americans were acquainted. Nor did the editorials and articles in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* shed much light upon what was later revealed as a complicated series of developments. The outbreak of hostilities between the Central Powers and the Allies was first represented as having little grounds.<sup>1</sup> James Sanaker, superintendent of the Red River Valley District, reviewed the year's accomplishments in military metaphors in the conference session of 1914. From Ashland, Wisconsin, to Benedict, North Dakota, he stated, his district held a battle line of over 650 miles, longer than the French-German border. This "holiness line" was sustained by an army with fortresses, garrisons, right and left flanks, offensives, and a standard bearer.<sup>2</sup> Such allusions to the overseas fighting gave little hint of the long-time workings of the sinister forces of nationalism, militarism, and economic imperialism, all more or less rampant among the great powers in the period since 1871, the end of the Franco-Prussian War. Native-born Americans and immigrants alike seemed oblivious to European rivalries of long standing, antedating by many years the climactic assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

In the critical July days of 1914 the *Talsmand* had more to say about the desirability of revising state laws to permit Bible reading in the public schools and of discouraging dancing under school auspices. Paul Haugan, the father of several children, some of whom would become state university graduates, declared himself in agreement with editor Wilhelmsen.<sup>3</sup> He failed to appreciate,

<sup>1</sup> *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (hereafter simply D.K.T.), August 27, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1914), 26-29.

<sup>3</sup> D.K.T., August 6, 1914. The article was first read as a paper before the Chicago District preachers, meeting in Racine on June 2, 1914. This was before the July crisis in Europe.

Of the Haugan family it was written a few years later (*Evangelisk Tidende*,



he explained, why the supreme court of the state of Wisconsin had ruled unconstitutional, in 1890, the reading of the Scriptures in public schools. More recently, he said, the same judicial body in Minnesota had reached a similar decision. The circumstance that these were Scandinavian-inhabited states added to the poignancy of the question, especially since church and state were headed by one and the same ruler in the Scandinavian lands abroad. While Haugan did not favor sectarian teaching in the common schools, and while he approved of the separateness of church and state, his words foreshadowed the issue of later days, whether Christianity should not be more openly recognized in the American educational system. If the Bible is the foundation of the American Constitution, as Haugan inferred, he was invoking a principle of lasting importance. In the perspective of nearly a half-century it may well be that Haugan and Wilhelmsen were touching a question of more vital concern to their country and to the world than the immediate question of military victory overseas. One fears that if the opponents of Bible reading had triumphed in all things, references to the deity would have been deleted from all American public documents, if not also from presidential addresses and from national hymns.

President Wilson's earlier foreign policy was accepted warmly by Wilhelmsen. In the midst of anti-administration clamor for a firmer hand in Mexican affairs and the protection of American oil and mining interests south of the Rio Grande he was inclined to think that Wilson's "watchful waiting," or non-recognition of the Huerta government in Mexico, was "not so far out of the way." Wilson suspected Huerta of complicity in the murder of his predecessor, Madero, a feeling shared by scholars to the present day. The chief executive had the best interests of the Mexican people at heart, said Wilhelmsen. From the annual conference meetings of 1915 came a resolution addressed to Wilson in appreciation of his "wise leadership in foreign policy in this critical time," with reference apparently to the delicate relations with the southern

March 22, 1923) that three had graduated from the University of North Dakota. One attended for three years, then went into business. The two youngest were still in school.

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neighbor as well as with the belligerent European nations. No comment came from *Talsmand* sources when, in 1917, the new Mexican constitution declared Mexican ownership of all Mexican soil and subsoil. American investors in gold and petroleum mining were not pleased with this threat to their pecuniary interests.<sup>4</sup>

These were critical years for the foreign language press, especially as the war came to the United States. Government regulations forbade the issuing of papers free of charge to anyone, the exchange of papers between foreign language editors, and the continuance of non-paying subscribers on the mailing lists. It fell to the lot of Carl A. Andersen to function as *Talsmand* and *Hyrdestemmen* editor, without an assistant, from 1914 to 1919. At the beginning of his term the Methodist Book Concern assumed financial responsibility for the management. Thereafter the conference would no longer elect the editor but would nominate him, nomination being tantamount to election however.<sup>5</sup>

Like his forerunner in the editorial chair, Andersen refused to divert the paper to the cause of national glory. During the periods of American neutrality (1914-17) and American belligerency (1917-18) he received, he confided, numerous items with requests for publication. He replied that readers would find war news and war comment in the daily newspapers. A few religious papers also published war items, he said, "particularly those that busy themselves with biblical prophecy."<sup>6</sup> Obviously, the *Talsmand* would not so busy itself.

Andersen would hardly be able to maintain an exclusive attitude indefinitely. Nevertheless, he declined to castigate Wilson upon his acceptance of William Jennings Bryan's resignation as secretary of state in 1915, following the German sinking of the *Lusitania*, a British passenger liner, carrying many United States citizens to their death. Bryan was of the firm opinion that, insofar as the notes to Germany were worded more strongly than the notes to Great Britain, Wilson was taking sides. Andersen thought highly of Bryan, who at one time was lauded as the personal sup-

<sup>4</sup> D.K.T., July 23, 1914. *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1915), 22.

<sup>5</sup> D.K.T., September 24, 1914, and February 17, 1916.

<sup>6</sup> D.K.T., February 17, 1916.

porter of eight boys and girls in mission schools abroad. Surprisingly, no conspicuous mention was made concerning the fateful sinking, although the trial run of that "largest and fastest steamship" had been noted in 1907. At that time the 790-foot vessel was said to be capable of a speed of  $25\frac{1}{2}$  knots. Perhaps equally sensational for Chicagoans in 1915 was the disaster of July 24th, when the lake steamer *Eastland*, laden with outing-bound Western Electric employees, capsized in the Chicago River. A number of Norwegian-Danish families were involved, but none fatally.<sup>7</sup>

Young people's activities proceeded with the usual regularity during the war, despite the inroads of military conscription in 1917-18. Lake Ripley Epworth League Institute got under way in 1916. Manager Thor H. Loberg reported an attendance of 50 at the Wisconsin lake. The Cambridge folk, he remarked gratefully, had brought teams of horses to the New London railroad station, about four miles from the camp. "When we unloaded from the hayracks on top of the hill," he explained, "we saw that someone had preceded us, for two big tents had been raised, one for our meetings and the other for our eatings." The grounds, appropriately named Willerup Park, were the property of the Cambridge congregation. Edward Erickson, then a young pastor, served as dean, a title held by Loberg from 1918 to 1923. Lake Ripley was declared to be the official conference institute in 1918. It was the first of its kind in Norwegian-Danish Methodism.<sup>8</sup>

District Epworth League conventions were held annually. The Chicago District young people had been meeting since 1896, the Minneapolis District since 1913, and the Red River Valley District convention was held for the first time in 1915. Junior Epworth Leagues had also been organized, largely through the inspiration of Josie Hansen of Moreland (later Asbury), Chicago. Her two-column appeal of 1916 for a Junior League in every pastoral charge stimulated the movement.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> D.K.T., August 15, 1907; April 8 and August 5, 1915.

<sup>8</sup> D.K.T., September 14, 1916. *These Twenty-five Years, 1916 to 1940*, an anniversary booklet on Lake Ripley Institute. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1918), 15.

<sup>9</sup> This information is deduced from announcements in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (July 8, 1915; March 9, 1916; June 7, 1917).

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Not without reason did the problem of preachers' salaries arise. Wartime prices were playing havoc with fixed incomes. As superintendent of the Minneapolis District J. P. Andersen informed the conference that six pastors on his district received less than \$500 a year and that the average salary of his men was less than half of the average for ministers of the West Wisconsin Conference. For the Norwegian-Danish preachers the average salary was computed to be \$570, while in the West Wisconsin Conference it was \$1,162. These figures included house rent but not mission money. With mission funds the Norwegian-Danish average was \$633. Perhaps a direct response to J. P. Andersen's jarring announcement was the organization of *Familieringen* (The Family Circle), composed of preachers' wives for the purpose of raising money for the pension fund. During the annual conference session of 1915 Mrs. Hans A. Ofstie was elected the first president. She presented her first report two years later, at which time the sum of \$110 was given to the Preachers' Aid Society.<sup>10</sup>

Other evidences of the relatively slight initial effect of the war upon the thinking of Norwegian-Danish Methodists are the reports of the general and annual conferences of 1916. Hans K. Madsen attended the General Conference, held at Saratoga Springs, New York, in the traditional month of May. He applauded the spiritual atmosphere created by the 180 delegates who left Chicago by special train. He was impressed with the "mighty power" of the church. He cited the "burning question" of the union of the Northern and Southern church bodies. "The day that it was discussed was one of the greatest in my experience," he said. A banquet for Scandinavian delegates was probably the first meeting of its kind in a General Conference, according to Madsen. Some 35 men were present. Delegates from Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, as well as from the Swedish and Norwegian-Danish conferences in America, spoke briefly. The honored guest, Albert C. Knudson of Boston University, delivered an address. Matters of common interest were discussed.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> D.K.T., October 21, 1915. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1915), 32, and (1917), 19.

<sup>11</sup> D.K.T., May 25, 1916.



The annual conference of 1916 was held in Stoughton, Wisconsin, a strong Norwegian center from pioneer days. C. A. Andersen was moved by the spirit of the local Lutherans in voluntarily opening their church for the Sunday services of the conference. Andersen generally adhered to things Norwegian. When Carl Schurz High School of Chicago inaugurated courses in Norse, he made known that students might transfer to Schurz for the purpose of studying in that department. On another occasion he was pleased to publish a review of Waldemar Ager's *Oberst Heg og hans Gutter* (Colonel Heg and his boys), submitted by H. P. Bergh. Bergh called attention to the chapter on religious life among the volunteers of the almost all-Norwegian Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment. There were interesting anecdotes, he said, about the Danish-born chaplain, C. L. Clausen, and also about "our own Norwegian Methodist brother, J. H. Johnson," who first was a sergeant in the ranks and subsequently became chaplain when Clausen returned to civilian life.<sup>12</sup>

Related to the First World War was the temperance question. Propelled to some extent by the government's emphasis upon thrift, as well as by the popular mental association of the brewing industry with Germans (Schlitz, Anheuser-Busch, et al), the movement for total abstinence, once strong in the nineteenth century, was greatly revived. It was in line with patriotism, therefore, as well as with longstanding Methodist beliefs, that the *Talsmand* referred to Kaiser Wilhelm's address to the German naval cadets in 1911, in which that monarch called for liberation from a German heritage through self-discipline. "In my twenty-two years as emperor," he was quoted as saying, "I have discovered that in nine out of ten cases the violations which have come to my attention were caused by liquor and its consequences." The conference session in its temperance report of 1917 expressed joy over the prospect that "this monarch of lust" would soon be dethroned. The report cautioned against relaxation in the struggle for complete national prohibition. Victory came with the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> D.K.T., August 26, 1915; October 5 and November 9, 1916.

<sup>13</sup> D.K.T., December 28, 1916. *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1917), 48.

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By the year 1917 the foreign-born citizens of America were joining in the war effort wholeheartedly. Even German-Americans were found to be surprisingly loyal to the cause of the Allies. According to common belief, German militarism alone had precipitated the conflict, which by April 6, 1917, brought the United States into action. As before, the *Talsmand* spared its readers much news of the day. One finds scant reference to such developments as German resumption of unrestricted submarine warfare, a new threat to neutral powers, or to the German effort to bring Mexico into the war against the United States if the United States should declare itself hostile to Germany. Nor was anything printed about the fall of the Russian Tsar, whose misfortune was hailed, at least in Allied and American quarters, as a significant step toward democracy in that war-weary empire. Toward the close of 1917 there were more frequent allusions to the terrible struggle abroad. The writer himself, too young then to comprehend the meaning of events, is hardly capable of analyzing the thoughts of his father, C. A. Andersen. Inasmuch as there were mild denunciations of *Tyskerne* (the Germans) at the dinner table, it is fairly certain that the *Talsmand* chief entertained personal animosities consistent with American anti-German feeling. I do not recall whether father considered the war to be a judgment of God. It is more likely that he viewed it as the result of man's folly and would have joined, not many years later, with the anonymous author of this somewhat cynical jingle:

To God the embattled nations sing and shout,  
"God strafe England!" and "God save the King!"  
God this, God that, and God the other thing!  
"Good God!" said God, "I've got my work cut out!"

Not often had anything in English appeared in the *Talsmand*. Late in 1917 there was published on the front page a patriotic poem. Covering the entire page, it began: "America, my country, I come at thy call." In English also, announcement was made of the organization of the War Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with Bishop Joseph F. Berry as president and Bishop Theodore S. Henderson as executive secretary. This information

appeared under the caption "Methodism to Cooperate with Government." In harmony with the times politically, the *Talsmand* presented, again in English, a short item entitled "Germany Furnishes the Proof." It read in part as follows: "Every foot of ground Germany has been forced to give up, every foot of land she has seized, have demonstrated the absolute necessity of defeating that sinister, intolerable thing called Germanism." <sup>14</sup>

The conference sessions of 1917 and 1918 reflected the war spirit. In 1917 the members adopted a resolution pledging "unswerving loyalty to the President of the United States and our cooperation in all phases of the patriotic program of the government." After the reading of the resolution one stanza of "America" was sung. A military chaplain then addressed the conference, after which the ministers saluted the flag with three cheers (hur-raraab) and sang "The Star Spangled Banner." Paul Haugan, in his report for the Red River Valley District, declared that Norwegian and Danish citizens of the United States could not be branded as "falsely neutral." Nor were they ashamed of old Norway (gamle Norge), nine-tenths of whose merchant vessels were in Allied service. He sanctioned the popular slogan, "Lick your plates and we will lick the Kaiser." <sup>15</sup>

Prior to the meeting of 1918 John M. Beckstrøm suggested through the *Talsmand*, in English, that a service flag for the entire conference should be displayed at the forthcoming annual session. Said he, "The unveiling of the flag will be in connection with the opening of the conference." Under Bishop William McDowell's leadership the conference was opened in Kedzie Church, Chicago, with the singing of "America." P. M. Peterson then read a resolution in support of the administration's war program, directed toward the use of all American means to insure peace. It was unanimously adopted by a standing vote. Edward Ericksen reported that 646 men were in military service, a figure confirmed in the *Talsmand* when the conference secretary, Ole Røhrstaff, also made known that four gold stars had appeared. The

<sup>14</sup> D.K.T., November 22, 1917; January 24 and April 18, 1918.

<sup>15</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1917), 14, 44, and 45.

first to die, said he, was Frank Helikson, younger brother of David and Daniel, pastors in the conference. District superintendents emphasized that there were no slackers in Norwegian-Danish Methodism, Schevenius pointing out that at least \$105,000 had been subscribed on the Chicago District alone for liberty loans.<sup>16</sup>

Occasionally an impartial voice was raised in defense of the foreign-born and their press in America. William Fairfield Warren, president emeritus of Boston University, commented, "One of the favorite slogans of our fanned-to-white-heat nationalism is 'One flag, one language.' Under its inspiration excited leaders are calling for suppression of all American journals not published in English. Is this propaganda serving the highest interests of the nation? I cannot think so." Contrary to the opinion of some overzealous patriots, the foreign-language press took a positive stand for American patriotism. In the case of the *Talsmand*, items were at times published through the Scandinavian Bureau of the Committee on Public Information, a government agency. Scandinavians in America had little reason to withhold their loyalty to the country of their adoption. The *Talsmand* warned toward the close of the war that the surrender of Bulgaria and the withdrawal of German troops to the Hindenburg Line should not cause America to relax, and that buying liberty bonds was more necessary than ever.<sup>17</sup>

Some diversion from war news was provided in the Billy Sunday evangelistic campaigns in Chicago and Duluth in 1918. Initial reactions in the *Talsmand* were favorable to the mass revivalism of the converted baseball player, once a champion base stealer for the Chicago Whitestockings (later White Sox). Andersen did not approve of all that Sunday said and did, he explained, but he believed that the results defied criticism. In similar vein John M. Beckstrøm called Sunday a sound preacher, fearless in attacking sin. Chicago would be better for his having been there, he

<sup>16</sup> D.K.T., July 18 and September 19, 1918. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1918), 13, 22, and 25. For the Chicago District 275 men were reported in uniform, while a figure of 213 was given for the Minneapolis District. Presumably the remaining 158 were men of the Red River Valley District.

<sup>17</sup> D.K.T., July 18, September 19, and October 17, 1918.



thought. After several months Schevenius and Haugan, reporting for their respective districts, did not look upon this "gymnast for Jesus" with the same approbation. In the opinion of Schevenius, Sunday preached fervently, and his organization worked like a clock, but no spiritual awakening came to Chicago. Haugan stated that the meetings failed to bring the anticipated results for the Norwegian-Danish Methodist churches at the head of Lake Superior but, he said, thanks should be given to God for the gains of other churches. Thus ended the efforts of what the cynical H. L. Mencken once called this "calliope of Zion," who was known on occasion to mount the pulpit, literally, and wave two American flags.<sup>18</sup>

Before C. A. Andersen's editorship terminated in 1919 he had reason to feel grateful for the cooperation of contributors like Bishop Henderson and James A. Sanaker. The bishop broke precedent, or established it, by sending in articles to lend moral support to the foreign-language press in difficult circumstances. Andersen termed these episcopal contributions a new development in the history of the paper. Sanaker's many installments had met with great reader interest. They included *Aabenbaringens Syner* (Visions of Revelation) and *Reviderede Blade af Wesleys Dagbog* (Revised Pages of Wesley's Diary).<sup>19</sup>

In June of 1918 the book committee of the Methodist Book Concern withdrew *Hyrdestemmen* from publication. The possibility of reviving this journal for children was referred to a conference committee that fall. Following a meeting with the Methodist Book Concern committee, the conference committee recommended resumption of publication by the conference, since aid in continuing the paper was refused. "It is too early," said John M. Beckstrøm, chairman of the committee, "to lay down our Norwegian-Danish work." He anticipated, wrongly it must be said, that immigration would continue as usual after the war.

<sup>18</sup> D.K.T., April 11 and 18, 1918. *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1918), 22 and 27.

<sup>19</sup> *Aabenbaringens Syner* ran consecutively from January 23 to July 31, 1919. *Reviderede Blade af Wesleys Dagbog* began on August 7, 1919. This writer found the 70th installment, probably the last, in the issue of November 24, 1921.

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Publication did resume before Christmas of 1918, the conference committee having renominated as editor C. A. Andersen, also responsible for the *Talsmand*, and Hans C. Munson as business manager. Thereupon the book concern committee offered to publish *Hyrdestemmen* if the Norwegian-Danish Conference would accept financial responsibility. In any event, it would be difficult to work up to the 2,800 paid subscriptions as of June, 1918. Eventually, *Hyrdestemmen* passed from the scene. Late in 1921 the committee of the Methodist Book Concern came with the long awaited announcement. Their special committee of investigation could not recommend a new lease of life for the Sunday school paper.<sup>20</sup>

While patriotism toward the United States was not wanting, a suspicion persisted that American authorities, whether in church or state, were mustering their forces against all "foreign" media and institutions. Yet suspicion was mingled with loyalty and appreciation, as when in 1921 the Methodist Book Concern was moved to suggest a consolidation of the three Norwegian-Danish Methodist papers, *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, *Østens Missionær*, and *Vidnesbyrdet*. While the respective editors in east and west felt grateful for the financial subsidy furnished by the book concern, they balked at the suggestion of losing their identity. On the occasion of the centennial of the book concern's house in Cincinnati, H. S. Haver of *Østens Missionær* extended greetings and stated that "without the help of the Methodist Book Concern it would be almost impossible to keep our three Norwegian-Danish periodicals going." When merger was proposed, however, the Eastern District protested.<sup>21</sup>

The Western Norwegian-Danish Conference went on record as being opposed to the three-way consolidation.<sup>22</sup> *Vidnesbyrdet*, they explained, had weathered the storms successfully for 32 years. For every Methodist subscriber there were three non-Methodist,

<sup>20</sup> D.K.T., October 31, 1918. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1918), 11, and (1919), 23.

<sup>21</sup> D.K.T., November 4, 1920; September 15, 1921.

<sup>22</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1921), 11.

incredible as it may seem. While *Vidnesbyrdet* had 1,800 on the mailing list, the conference membership being only 1,000, the *Talsmand*, so they said, had only 2,500 subscribers in a constituency of 6,000 (5,000 would have been more accurate). The Western Conference authorized a committee to provide a suitable paper for the Pacific Coast in the event of a merger and nominated H. P. Nelsen as their candidate for editor of the proposed new organ for all Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America.

*Talsmand* editor P. M. Peterson shortly announced that the new weekly, *Evangelisk Tidende* (Evangelical News), would be published in 24 pages, whereas the *Talsmand* had had only 16. An encouraging word came from Melvin L. Olson of the Western Conference, confiding that he had long felt that the publication of three papers was wasteful of the funds of the American mother church and that the Norwegian-Danish work had also been kept divided somewhat by the regional emphasis. Beginning with the issue of November 30, 1922, the sub-title "Gospel Tidings" gave way to "The Norwegian-Danish Christian Advocate," joining the other "Advocates" in Methodism.<sup>23</sup>

*Sambaandet*, privately owned and edited by C. J. Heckner, continued to serve the immediate needs of the Pacific Coast membership. At the same time, appreciation was expressed to P. M. Peterson for his creditable editing of the new *Evangelisk Tidende*. Peterson ordered that copies of the paper be sent via air mail in 1924 to the brethren meeting in annual session in San Francisco and received official thanks for his consideration.<sup>24</sup>

By 1925 *Sambaandet* was viewed with some misgivings as an unwelcome competitor. A committee of the Western Conference thereupon made clear that their journal was privately published, which everyone should have known, they said, and that *Evangelisk Tidende* was the official voice of the Norwegian-Danish church nationally. To this statement Melvin Olson subscribed, reminding his colleagues and friends in the West that while *Sambaandet* cost only \$1.00 per year (*Evangelisk Tidende* cost \$1.50), it was small-

<sup>23</sup> D.K.T., December 22 and 29, 1921.

<sup>24</sup> *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922), 36, and (1924), 14.

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er and appeared less frequently. "I see no reason," he said, "why our members and constituents cannot be furnished 100% with our paper," meaning *Evangelisk Tidende*.<sup>25</sup>

P. M. Peterson's editorship, from 1922 to 1925, brought a paper in which four pages were regularly in English, under "Young People's Department." Two veterans, James A. Sanaker and Carl Frederick Eltzholtz, were frequent contributors. The unpleasant case of Anton Bast, charged with mishandling church funds in Denmark, received the editor's attention in many issues. Peterson defended Bast, bishop of the Scandinavian Area since 1920, and resident in Copenhagen. Ministers of the Western Conference also sided with Bast, expressing fullest confidence in his integrity and recognizing the services of the Danish minister of justice in presenting to the Danish parliament a bill which would make impossible the use of unfair methods of procedure in similar cases in the future. Perhaps the Danish bishop's heart was too generous to fit the pattern of strict financial accountability, according to Danish law.<sup>26</sup>

As regular as the paper itself were the *reiseruter* (itineraries) of the district superintendents of the Middle West. Photographs of the seminary graduating class also came with the season. Differing a bit from his predecessors, Peterson introduced front-cover nature scenes in *Evangelisk Tidende*.

While the thread of patriotism may not be visible throughout the entire fabric, there are tinges of loyalty, spotty but plentiful, to things American as well as Norwegian in the concern for institutional growth. One might suppose that irrational wartime and postwar hysteria in the country accentuated a fear among the so-called hyphenated citizens that their identity might be sub-

<sup>25</sup> For the Pacific Northwest District in *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1925), 24.

<sup>26</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende* (hereafter E.T.), April 2, May 14, and May 28, 1925. *Minutes*, Western Norwegian-Danish Conference (1925), 38. The Western Conference resolution charged that critics of Bishop Bast succeeded in getting his personal accounts and the accounts of the Methodist Central Mission of Copenhagen investigated by the police court of Copenhagen. Bast's accounts as superintendent of the Central Mission extended back twelve years. The Western brethren charged that the police judge made use of methods of procedure unfair according to American practice.



merged in 100% Americanism. It was in that atmosphere that one district superintendent, Schevenius of Chicago, pleaded for greater support of the Norwegian-Danish Theological School. Said he, in his report of 1916: <sup>27</sup>

We live in a new time of thawing. The river rises. The waters rush violently. Much that we formerly built upon has gone under. The dark demon of ignorance has disappeared into the background. The solution of the times is light, more light. We hope therefore that every pastor and every congregation will support our school and make special efforts to set it upon its feet. . . . It is the very pulse of our work and the only institution we have complete control of. If we do not take care of it, we are through.

By 1919 Schevenius turned attention toward the school's ineffectiveness at certain points. Candidates for graduation, he believed, were so preoccupied with Noah Webster that they could not offer a simple prayer in Norwegian. The living *rapport* between pulpit and pew was being undermined. He would have a longer course of study, or perhaps an increase in the teaching staff. At the time, Professor Simonsen was carrying the teaching burden together with T. Otmann Firing, as far as the Norwegian-Danish offerings were concerned.<sup>28</sup>

Dr. Simonsen's last official act was to represent the annual conference in the General Conference of 1920. His request for retirement was read in the annual conference session that fall. By committee action a loving cup was presented to him, and some laudatory words were spoken. The *Talsmand* thought Simonsen unique in that he had stood on the same plane with American church leaders, yet remained with his brethren of the smaller Scandinavian connection. His place would be hard to fill, it was said.<sup>29</sup>

A younger man, not quite 30, came to the headship of the Norwegian-Danish Theological School. Born in Horten, Norway, in 1890, and early taking to the sea from that beautiful natural harbor on the western shore of the Oslofjord, T. Otmann Firing

<sup>27</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1916), 29.

<sup>28</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1919), 22.

<sup>29</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1920), 19. D.K.T., November 4, 1920.

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came to Brooklyn in 1908 with the full-rigger *Lancing*. Through the ministry of Anton Trelstad, Bethelship pastor, he and others of the crew were converted. Firing began his studies in the Evanston seminary in 1911 and continued at Northwestern University and Garrett Biblical Institute, where he earned both the B.A. and B.D. degrees. Meanwhile, he assisted in teaching at the seminary, from 1917 to 1920.<sup>30</sup>

In the fall of 1920 T. O. Firing, principal, scanned a horizon both threatening and promising. There were the nationalistic excesses of the Ku Klux Klan in America. There was the Teapot Dome scandal. There were signs of economic depression. And in the Hitler-Ludendorff beer hall *putsch* in Munich men of vision might have foreseen the rise of a militant and dangerous government in Germany. But there was light in the darkness. Prohibition had come in the form of the Eighteenth Amendment, bringing to a successful ending the long struggle of the temperance forces, to which Methodists had given staunch support. National woman suffrage had arrived through the Nineteenth Amendment. Anti-foreign hatred had begun to subside. The big powers stood on the threshold of a naval disarmament conference.

Professor Firing settled down to teaching and administrative routine, combined with fund raising, much dependent upon the annual Christmas offering from the congregations. With the able assistance of Merrill Egeland (1920-24), who traced his lineage in Norwegian-Danish Methodism from boyhood days in Stoughton, Wisconsin, courses were taught as in previous years with few additions, such as an introduction to the sciences. P. M. Peterson also taught in 1920-21.<sup>31</sup>

Welcome breaks in routine came with the excitement created by visits of prominent persons. In 1920 Bishop Theodore S. Henderson lunched with the seminarians and spent several hours in the school. His visit was repeated in 1922, when he delivered a

<sup>30</sup> Frederick Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser* (Chicago, 1934), 24. *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 87.

<sup>31</sup> Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen, "Our school in Evanston," in E.T., December 21, 1922. T. O. Firing to A.W.A., April 14, 1962.

morning lecture on the importance of bilingual work in Methodism. His afternoon lecture dealt with theology. The *Talsmand* was moved to remark that no bishop had shown such interest in the school and in Norwegian-Danish activities previously.<sup>32</sup>

Important from the standpoint of morale was the visit of Fridtjof Nansen in 1923. Having finished an address to a capacity audience at Northwestern University on the subject of post-war reconstruction in Europe, the eminent polar explorer and humanitarian, then engaged in refugee work, spoke to the seminary students. He emphasized the necessity for the Scandinavian states to stand together in the interests of peace and world order. One of the greatest of the twentieth century Norwegians, Nansen had only recently (1922) been awarded the Nobel peace prize.<sup>33</sup> So the seminarians, mainly American-born and American-minded, were likewise prompted to a fresh appreciation of their Scandinavian heritage.

Not so caught up in the national spirit of the 1920's was the Deaconess and Girls' Home (later known also as the Deaconess and Woman's Home) in Chicago. The works of charity and personal care went on, regardless of the times, on behalf of the needy in the community and of the many young women, some newly arrived from abroad, who wanted a homelike and Christian dwelling. Several of the latter, all from Denmark, were preparing for foreign missionary service and were attending nearby Kedzie Church in the interval. Among those who eventually gave their lives to the distant peoples of Asia and Africa were Maren Bording, Alfrida Kostrup, Maren Tirsgaard, Marie Bjarno, Alma Ericksen, Anna Lerbeck, and Marie Jensen.

Maren Bording and Alfrida Kostrup came to the old deaconess apartments in 1911 and resided there while completing nurses' training in Chicago's Cook County Hospital. They also visited frequently while attending the Methodist Chicago Training School, located on South Indiana Avenue. In 1917 they were assigned by the Methodist Board of Foreign Missions to the Philippine Islands. With one term completed, they were assigned

<sup>32</sup> D.K.T., November 4, 1920. E.T., December 21, 1922.

<sup>33</sup> E.T., November 29, 1923.

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to Korea to do welfare work and to conduct baby clinics. After long and fruitful service they were evacuated in 1940, because of dangers inherent in the Second World War.

Maren Tirsgaard and Marie Bjarno also arrived from Denmark at the home, in 1915. While attending Northwestern University they met Professor William Schermerhorn, a retired Methodist missionary, who counselled with them encouragingly. Miss Tirsgaard earned a master's degree at Northwestern before departing in 1924 for India, where she served as principal of a school until 1956. She now lives in retirement in Pasadena, California. Eventually her friend, Miss Bjarno, met and married Paul Dibble, and together they completed one term in India. Although the depression put an end to their foreign service, they became active in the Rock River Conference.

Alma Ericksen came to Chicago as a trained nurse in the 1920's. After obtaining additional academic and religious training at Northwestern University and the Chicago Training School she left for China, in the early 1930's. Her assignment to a hospital in Chungking proved to be exciting and dangerous, with the opening of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 and the subsequent struggle between Communist and Free China. Eventually she was assigned to Sarawak, where she still supervises a clinic.

Two frequent visitors to the home in Chicago would make their missionary impacts in Katanga, Africa. Anna Lerbeck, a graduate of the University of Chicago in the 1920's, labored faithfully among the Africans until her retirement in 1958. Marie Jensen went out to the same area in 1916 or 1917 with Bishop and Mrs. John Springer. She became acquainted with Moise Tshombe and his family and continues to be concerned for their welfare. Miss Jensen lives in retirement in Denmark.<sup>34</sup> It might well be said of the Deaconess and Girls' Home that the war and post-war years brought precious opportunities for assisting adventurous and dedicated young women in breaking down national barriers and hastening the day of Christian brotherhood.

<sup>34</sup> Petra Olausen, retired deaconess, to Borghild Halvorsen, former superintendent of the home, February 1, 1962. Mrs. Halvorsen kindly relayed the letter to the author.



A big step was taken in 1917 when, after six years, Deaconesses Emma Linderud and Petra Olausen moved from a six-room flat at 1925 North Sawyer Avenue on Chicago's northwest side to 1856 on the same avenue. The site, purchased at a cost of \$5,100, consisted of two lots, each 25 by 170 feet, on which stood a serviceable seven-room frame building. Active in completing the purchase were the board of directors, headed by Thor H. Loberg, and the district superintendent, C. W. Schevenius.<sup>35</sup>

Another new day dawned for the home when membership in the Chicago Federation of Aged and Adult Charities brought with it the privilege of participation in an annual city-wide tag day. From that source alone came \$1,275 in 1917 and increasingly larger amounts in succeeding years.<sup>36</sup> Thus more charitable work was made possible.

Perhaps in anticipation of another important development, *Evangelisk Tidende* devoted a special number (January 12, 1922) to "The Deaconess and Woman's Home." Articles on the purpose, the beginnings, and the growth were contributed by editor P. M. Peterson, C. W. Schevenius, Petra Olausen, and Emma Linderud. Explaining the function of the Deaconess Aid Society was Borg-hild D. Halvorsen's article, while Josie W. Hansen dealt with the financial program of that society. Ground was broken for the new and present building in 1922. Thor H. Loberg was still serving faithfully, almost indispensably, as chairman of the board of directors (in fact, from 1913 to 1930), while John Erickson was chairman of the building committee. Present as the main speaker at the laying of the cornerstone on June 11, 1922, was Dr. John R. Thompson, superintendent of all Methodist city mission work in Chicago. The deaconesses and their "tenants" moved into the new structure, only partially finished, on November 11, 1922. John Thompson again obliged the Norwegian-Danish friends on Sunday, January 7, 1923, the day of dedication. Bishop Henderson delivered the dedicatory address. Also a speaker was George Dixon,

<sup>35</sup> *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1917)*, 28. *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference (1943)*; historical section, page 72.

<sup>36</sup> *Minutes, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1918)*, 20. *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference (1943)*, 72.

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board chairman of the Chicago Home Mission and Church Extension Society.<sup>37</sup>

Costing \$41,500 and covering an area of 122 feet by 50 feet, the three-story brick structure of the Deaconess and Girls' Home drained the treasury, which at that time contained \$10,700. Additional funds were secured, partly through the efforts of Schevenius, the district superintendent, from the Centenary, from the Chicago Home Mission and Church Extension Society, and from George Dixon personally. Before the year of 1923 was over, the 37 rooms of the home were more than filled, with 50 residents.<sup>38</sup>

Another significant development of the post-war period was the publication of a new hymnal, *Evangeliske Toner*, containing great religious tunes and words of both medieval and modern derivation. It featured not only continental but English and American creations. The original conference hymnal committee of 1917, charged with the duty of selection and arrangement, underwent several changes in personnel, mainly because of removals from Chicago. Composing the final committee were three pastors: C. W. Schevenius, H. C. Munson, and Gustav Mathisen. After examining carefully many collections, and with the typing assistance of Mrs. Gudrun Nomedal and the help of Mrs. Alice Schevenius in proofreading and advice, the committee reported that the new hymnal would come off the press of the Methodist Book Concern in the fall of 1922.<sup>39</sup>

P. M. Peterson, James A. Sanaker, and others were high in their praise of *Evangeliske Toner*. Peterson explained that he could speak objectively, although at one time he was a member of the hymnal committee. The Methodist Book Concern printed over 5,000 copies and set the sale price at \$1.40 per copy. Proving

<sup>37</sup> E.T., January 22, 1922, and January 4, 1933. *Journal and Year Book* (1943), 72. George Dixon was the grandson of one of the first families of Chicago. His grandfather was one of the founders of the First Methodist Church (now Chicago Temple) in 1832. He and his father served as Sunday school superintendents there for more than a generation. C. W. Schevenius to A.W.A., January 31, 1962.

<sup>38</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922), 20. Dixon's personal contribution may have been about \$2,600. His interest in the home and his efforts to secure funds were invaluable.

<sup>39</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1922), 31.

popular, the book was eventually out of stock. Childhood favorites were to be found in the volume, Petersen noted. Also in "old reliable" hymns the publication was rich, said he, mentioning specifically such gems as N. F. S. Grundtvig's two contributions, "Kirken den er et gammelt hus" ("Built on a rock the church doth stand," according to a familiar but inaccurate American translation) and "Paaskemorgen slukker sorgen" ("Easter morning ends all sorrow").<sup>40</sup> In the issues of the *Tidende* from January 4 to March 8, 1923, Peterson featured a hymn each week, including "Løft dit hoved; Se det dages!" (Lift your head! Lo, the day is breaking!) by an unknown author; P. M. Peterson's translation of "Underfuld dit navn er vorden" (Glorious things of Thee are spoken), by John Newton; "Mer hellighed giv mig" (More holiness give me), by Philip P. Bliss; and Schevenius' translation of "Faedrenes tro! Du lever end" (Faith of our fathers, living still), by Frederick William Faber.

Sanaker professed to no ability in singing but felt that there was much value in memorizing hymns nevertheless. In the best sense of the word, he said, the hymns and songs of Christendom were all catholic, that is, common or universal. "Faith of our fathers," he pointed out, was written by Faber, who became a Roman Catholic priest before his earthly race was run. To Faber also one must attribute the beautiful lines of "There's a wideness in God's mercy," translated by Schevenius. Most representative of the old medieval church, in Sanaker's opinion, was "Jesus, the very thought of Thee," by Bernard of Clairvaux. Sanaker was inclined to think that children and young people learned more from the songs and hymns than from the Sunday school lessons.<sup>41</sup>

The organization, content, and spiritual quality of the selections in *Evangeliske Toner* are impressive. A personal examination uncovers a galaxy of authors, composers, and tunes gathered from many hymnals and song collections of an earlier day,

<sup>40</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende*, November 23, 1922. C. W. Schevenius to A.W.A., February 28, 1962. P. M. Peterson's name does appear at the end of the preface to the hymnal, together with those of Bishop Henderson, Schevenius, Munson, and Mathisen.

<sup>41</sup> E.T., February 8, 1923.

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as well as more recent creations. Representing most prominently the non-Scandinavian poets are Charles Wesley and Isaac Watts, who seemingly vied with each other in religious versification in eighteenth century England. Composers run the full gamut, well illustrating the universality of music. Here one finds the classical German melodies of Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Bach, and Weber. Here also are the singable productions of Lowell Mason, often called the father of American church music, who determined the trend of both secular and sacred group singing in nineteenth century America and exerted a predominant influence upon public school music. Here likewise, most frequently in the section entitled *Kristenlivet* (the Christian life), are the popular contributions of E. S. Lorenz, George C. Stebbins, Ira D. Sankey, D. B. Towner, E. O. Excell, and Charles H. Gabriel.

State church priests and poets of Denmark and Norway are well recognized. Bishop Grundtvig has been mentioned. Of the same Danish Lutheran tradition are the lines of Bernhard Severin Ingemann, Thomas Kingo, and Hans Adolf Brorson. Ingemann wrote the beautiful lines of "Deilig er jorden" (Delightful is the earth), set to a familiar second-century melody which is most often heard in "Fairest Lord Jesus." Kingo, bishop and psalm book publisher, is identified with "Milde Jesus, kom at røre" (Gentle Jesus, come to touch), set to the notes of Johann Schop. Bishop Brorson is perhaps best remembered for "Den store hvide flok" (The great white host), sung to the tune of a Norwegian folk song by the eminent Norwegian composer, Edvard Grieg.

Counterparts of the Danish poets in Norway were Magnus Brostrup Landstad, Johan Nordahl Brun, and Peter Dass. Landstad's "Nu lov Guds store navn" (Now praise God's great name) is set to J. Crüger's melody. "Jesus lever, graven brast" (Jesus lives, the grave burst open) is the product of Bishop Brun, his lines being accompanied by the notes of John Rud Ahle. "O Jesus, for din alterfod" (O Jesus, at the foot of Thine altar) is a contribution by Dass, another combination of pastor and poetic artist. There was Wilhelm Andreas Wexels, disciple of Grundtvig in nineteenth century Norway and an avid opponent of rational-



ism in theology. He will ever be remembered for "O taenk naar engang samles skal" (O think of the time when shall be gathered), sung at many a graveside service to the melody of Nicolaus Herman. Thomas B. Barratt, who departed from Methodist ranks to give inspirational leadership to Norway's Pentecostal (Filadelfia) movement, wrote the pensive "Blomsten falmer" (The flower fadeth).

Of special interest to this study are the poetic works of many who belonged to the Norwegian-Danish Methodist fellowship, both overseas and in America. Few would have expected Christian B. Willerup, the busy pioneer of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America and founder of Methodism in Denmark, to write "Her et tempel til Guds aere" (Here a temple to the honor of God). Accompanied by one of Bach's tunes, it was intended for use at church dedications. Martin Hansen, pastor on both sides of the ocean, and author of a hymnal of his own, wrote "O sjælehyrde" (O shepherd of souls), the tune coming from fifteenth century Germany. O. P. Petersen's "O høie sabbats hvile" (O high Sabbath rest), Haagensen's "Du Aandens sterke røst" (Thou strong voice of the Spirit), Eltzholtz's Christmas poem, "Et barn er født os denne dag" (A child is born to us this day), and his sister Alberta's stately "Du store, du sterke, du vaeldige Gud" (Thou great, thou strong, thou mighty God) round out the selection of representative poetic creations of this order.

It is as translators that Norwegian-Danish Methodists shone more frequently, some having numerous translations to their credit. A one-selection listing might read as follows:

<i>Translator</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
O. P. Petersen.....	Charles Wesley.....	"O for a thousand tongues to sing"
Andrew Haagensen....	Augustus Toplady.....	"Rock of ages"
Christian Treider.....	(unknown) .....	"God, who created earth and heaven"
Hans P. Bergh.....	L. E. Jones.....	"There is power in the blood"
Martin Hansen.....	George Keith.....	"How firm a founda- dation"

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<i>Translator</i>	<i>Author</i>	<i>Title</i>
Nels E. Simonsen . . . . .	Benjamin Schmolck . . . . .	"My Jesus, as Thou wilt"
Hans C. Munson . . . . .	J. M. Gray . . . . .	"O listen to the wondrous story"
Gustav Mathisen . . . . .	George Matheson . . . . .	"O love that wilt not let me go"
C. August Peterson . . . . .	Fanny Crosby . . . . .	"Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it"
P. M. Peterson . . . . .	Robert Grant . . . . .	"O worship the King"
Carl W. Schevenius . . . . .	Edward Perronet . . . . .	"All hail the power of Jesus' name"
Ole Røhrstaff . . . . .	Reginald Heber . . . . .	"The Son of God goes forth to war"
H. P. Nelsen . . . . .	J.G.F. and E.A.H. . . . .	"When I see the blood"
Alberta Eltzholtz . . . . .	Charles Wesley . . . . .	"Search our hearts, O God"
Jeanette Amundsen . . . . .	Roy Palmer . . . . .	"My faith looks up to Thee"

One whose translating accomplishments were little short of phenomenal was Elevine Heede. Born in Arendal, Norway, her parents sought to provide their only child with the best in formal education. On a study trip in France she resided in the home of a Wesleyan pastor and underwent a spiritual reorientation. While teaching for many years in a girls' school in Arendal, she attended the Methodist church there. Her alert pastor, Martin Hansen, persuaded her to take the position of teacher of Norwegian and English in the theological school in Christiania (Oslo) in 1874. Outstanding as a teacher and as editor of *Børnenes Søndagsblad* (The Children's Sunday Paper), she is best identified with her authorship and translation of hymns and songs. About 200 of them appeared in *Sions Harpe*, long used among Methodists in Norway.<sup>42</sup> Representative of her translations in *Evangeliske Toner* are Fanny Crosby's "Rescue the perishing," Sarah Flower Adams' "Nearer, my God, to Thee," and S. O'Maley Cluff's "For you I am praying."

<sup>42</sup> J. Thorkildsen, *Den Norske Metodistkirkes Historie* (Oslo, 1926), 189-190.

To conclude the excursion into *Evangeliske Toner*, a musical publication in which patriotism probably played but a minor part, a word should be said concerning the sources of the selections. Perhaps more hymns were taken from *Konferansens Salmebog* and Gustav Jensen's *Forslag til Revideret Salmebog* than from other forerunners. But many earlier hymnals are cited, including *Israels Sange*, *Sions Harpe*, *De Norske Metodisters Salmebog*, *De Danske Metodisters Salmebog*, *Concordia*, *Kirkeklokkens Sange*, *Pilegrims Sangeren*, and Haagensen's *Salmebog*.

*Evangeliske Toner* contained 585 hymns and songs, with notes. In the words of Schevenius, chairman of the committee, the material was selected from "the rich sacred-hymnal storehouses of all ages." Poetic quality and evangelistic content were given chief consideration. The tunes "had sung themselves into the religious consciousness of the people." Not only was the new book well received by the congregations directly involved from coast to coast but it was commended highly outside the immediate circles of the church. No less an authority than F. Melius Christiansen, of St. Olaf College fame, described it as the most extensive and comprehensive collection of religious songs published in the Norwegian and Danish languages.<sup>43</sup>

In conjunction with national and international issues, editor P. M. Peterson and others let their opinions be known in the post-war years of Harding and Coolidge. Peterson deplored the defeat of Woodrow Wilson's idealistic principles at the polls in 1920, referring to the retiring and ailing president as "the greatest and most farsighted spirit that the world catastrophe produced." Wilson's Fourteen Points, the last of which called for the organization of a League of Nations, stood as the highest expression of the hope of mankind, said Peterson. While he alleged that Republicans were appealing too strongly to the isolationist brand of patriotism, it is doubtful whether *Talsmand* readers as a whole agreed with him. He found some consolation later in the promise of world peace held out in the opening ship-scraping address by Charles Evans Hughes, Secretary of State, at the naval disarmament

<sup>43</sup> *Journal and Year Book* (1943), 66.

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ment conference in Washington, D.C. But the editor was not pleased for long. The self-same conference of naval powers came up with a four-power pact guaranteeing mutual protection of each other's possessions in the Pacific area. "If the League of Nations was wrong, the four-power pact is worse," said Peterson. He went on to analyze congressional election results in 1922 as "a well deserved defeat" for the high-tariff and "America alone" Republicans.<sup>44</sup>

During the French military occupation of the Ruhr region Peterson complimented Senator William E. Borah of Idaho for switching to collectivism. Borah had declared that the United States should intervene diplomatically to halt French mistreatment of Germans. Yet when President Warren G. Harding, hardly a collectivist, died in 1923, there was no vindictiveness in Peterson's heart. America had lost "a good and upright man," whose efforts to solve international problems came too late. Confidence was expressed in his successor, Calvin Coolidge, who even added to his oath, "May God help me thereto."<sup>45</sup>

P. M. Peterson threw himself into discussion of public affairs with a fervor reminiscent of that of Christian Treider in the 1880's. Far from tilting at windmills, he expressed concern on many matters involving righteousness and truth. He praised William Jennings Bryan for his important role in the adoption of the Eighteenth (Prohibition) Amendment, but with the Great Commoner's strict biblical views on the origin of man he could not agree. It should be borne in mind, he said, that the church once scoffed at the astronomical discoveries upon which today's knowledge of the heavens rests. The theory of biological evolution, said Peterson, did not question the whether but rather the how of God's workings. Genesis 1:1 was not in peril. Something of the same spirit had moved James A. Sanaker to suggest, in 1916, that modern biblical criticism, though not all to the good, had at least freed men from slavery to the letter (*Bogstavstraeldom*).<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> D.K.T., November 11, 1920, and November 24, 1921. E.T., January 26 and November 16, 1922.

<sup>45</sup> E.T., February 1 and August 9, 1923.

<sup>46</sup> D.K.T., April 6, 1916, and May 26, 1921. E.T., May 11, 1922.



The perennial problem of editors is pointed up in Peterson's words: <sup>47</sup>

For all good advice we say thanks. We govern ourselves by it as well as we can. It sounds like this: "Give us more English." "Give us less English." "I am glad that you are giving consideration to great themes." "The great themes it is best to ignore." "Be so kind as to correct what I am sending." "Please do not make any changes in what I am submitting." "Thanks for your latest remarkable editorial." "Your latest editorial is meaningless. Discontinue my subscription."

A forceful reminder of the contribution of immigrants to American life came with the announcement of the death of Senator Knute Nelson of Minnesota in 1923. His public career was traced from the time of his arrival from Voss as a six-year-old boy. Successively elected to the national House of Representatives (1882), the governorship of the State of Minnesota (1892), and the United States Senate (1895), Nelson served in the Senate until his sudden death on a train near Baltimore on April 28, 1923. He was Republican in affiliation, but independent in his views, said the *Tidende*. President Wilson had advised the Democrats of Minnesota not to oppose him in his latest re-election, in 1919. As indicated in an earlier chapter, Knute Nelson at one time frequented the Sunday school in the Norwegian-Danish Methodist church of Cambridge, Wisconsin. When the congregation celebrated their sixtieth anniversary in 1912, Nelson, as at other times, congratulated them. Perhaps the last recognition of Nelson by Norwegian-Danish Methodists came, coincidentally, through *Evangeliske Toner* (1922). In that well organized collection of hymns appears Nelson's translation of "Come, ye disconsolate." The hymn was originally written by an Irish poet, Thomas Moore.<sup>48</sup>

Some ministerial members of the Norwegian-Danish Conference were taking an active interest in things Norwegian on the community or regional levels. Hans K. Madsen, for example, helped to arrange a festive evening in 1921 in Minneapolis First

<sup>47</sup> E.T., May 25, 1922.

<sup>48</sup> D.K.T., August 1, 1912. E.T., May 10, 1923.

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Church in honor of Colonel Hans C. Heg, commanding officer of the almost all-Norwegian Fifteenth Wisconsin Regiment of the Civil War. Professor Gisle Bothne, chairman of the Norse department in the University of Minnesota, delivered the main address. Among others who spoke were Asle Knudsen, the pioneer pastor, and Madsen. In 1923, sixty years after the gallant officer met death on the field of Chickamauga, the *Tidende* carried an appeal for funds for a park in Heg's memory at historic Muskego in south-eastern Wisconsin.<sup>49</sup>

When in 1925 the Norwegians of Minnesota decided to commemorate the centennial of the arrival of the first contingent of immigrants, H. K. Madsen served on the program committee and also gave a major address on Sunday morning, June 7th, at the state fair grounds in St. Paul. For Madsen, in a sense, 1914 was being repeated, for in that year he had exercised his striking forensic ability on the same grounds on *syttende mai* in celebration of a hundred years of Norwegian independence. President Calvin Coolidge was the principal speaker in 1925. Madsen addressed the mass meeting of 64,000 in the Norwegian tongue, reviving their memories of Cleng Peerson, the Stavanger Quakers who sailed on the sloop *Restorationen*, and the mid-century beginnings of the Lutherans and Methodists, in Wisconsin. Himself technically trained from Horten, Norway, he noted the contributions of Norwegian-American engineers, as well as statesmen, to American progress. He held that the Norwegian element in the United States had played an important part in reform movements, for the abolition of Negro slavery and the removal of the saloon.<sup>50</sup> Whether he was aware of it or not, Madsen on that Sunday in Minnesota was completing a cycle of not only Norwegian but of Methodist history. It was those very sloopers of 1825 and their descendants who, in fair numbers, had encountered and adopted Methodist beliefs and practices in upper New York State and later in the Fox River valley of Illinois.

Patriotism, that without which men normally cannot breathe,

<sup>49</sup> D.K.T., June 23, 1921. E.T., February 15, 1923.

<sup>50</sup> E.T., July 30 and August 6, 1925.

ran high in the decade beginning with the outbreak of hostilities in Europe. Goaded by the prevailing hatred-filled atmosphere, patriotism sometimes degenerated into a vengeful and sinister nationalism. While extreme vindictiveness does not seem to have conquered the emotions of the European-born Methodists, it is probable that their zeal for America was tempered somewhat by a natural love for the Scandinavian fatherlands. To some they might appear to have been inconsistent, even disloyal. But need a man cease to love his mother because he has taken to himself a wife? Or, to change the metaphor, would it have been to the best interests of America if all her immigrant sons and daughters had divested themselves of their distinctiveness and lost their identities in a common melting pot? Probably not. Immigrant contributions may be considered an essential part of American culture. The orchestral instruments cannot all be alike, yet their separate and unique qualities do merge into the symphonic harmony of the whole. The European culture would linger on, although with the passage of time linguistic and psychological breaks with the European homelands would become increasingly perceptible.

## *Americanization Hastens Merger*

THE FIRST WORLD WAR provided a catalyst in which native-born and foreign-born Americans fused their separate identities into one. That the process called Americanization had already begun prior to the earth-shaking holocaust of 1914-18 is sufficiently clear. Yet the war stimulated pride in things American to new heights. An intensified national spirit made difficult the preservation of cherished traditions, both American and more remotely European. For the sons and daughters of the people from across the sea, as for Americans generally, memories of St. Mihiel and the Argonne Forest lost little in vividness for the time being. The people called Americans had endured anguish and rejoicing together, had fought to save the world for democracy, to borrow Woodrow Wilson's historic words. Now they seemed to be committed to a common culture, divested of its European facade.

Under the conditions prevailing from the close of one war to the outbreak of another, Norwegian-Danish Methodists maintained their corporate existence but moved gradually toward merger with the American Methodist communion. From the American church had they come and, given the trend toward unity, to it would they return. In fact, Norwegian-Danish Methodists had never claimed or desired complete autonomy. Both as a mission before 1880 and as an annual conference after that year they had always welcomed the American bishops who made their appearance in the annual sessions as chairmen, administrators, and spiritual exhorters. The Norwegian-Danish branch of American Methodism sent delegates to the General Conferences and followed the directives of the larger church and participated fully in the vast enterprises of the entire denomination.

In many respects the outlook at the threshold of the 1920's was encouraging. To be sure, a church here and there had either been closed or was about to terminate its services, but the majority of the congregations were thriving. On the Chicago District, for



example, quite a few churches had much to look forward to. These included the Chicago churches and Evanston, Racine Trinity, Racine Bethany, Milwaukee, Ludington, Manistee, and Detroit. Stoughton, under the pastoral leadership of Iver T. Slaatte, was especially active. From Stoughton came the most young men, proportionately, to the Norwegian-Danish Theological School in Evanston.<sup>1</sup>

Other instances of progress could be cited. In 1920 Hans K. Madsen accomplished a master stroke, it was believed, in selling the old Minneapolis First Church and purchasing the Halmrast Building, located at the busy intersection of Bloomington Avenue and Lake Street. The members had been gravitating southward. Jews had been replacing them in the old community and were now interested in remodeling the Methodist structure into a synagogue, which has since burned down (November 19, 1960). On the second floor of the two-story Halmrast Building was an assembly hall, once used by the Masonic order, now to become the church sanctuary. From the many stores and offices in the building rents were collected, making possible the ultimate final payment on the transaction.<sup>2</sup> First Church continued to be one of the strongest in the conference. Eventually the business building was sold, in 1944, the proceeds being applied toward construction of Asbury Church, a beautiful edifice on Bloomington Avenue and 43rd Street.

In 1927 Norwegian-Danish pastors gave serious consideration to extending their mission to Norwegian-inhabited sections of Canada. Pastors from the Western Conference were meeting with groups of Norwegians in British Columbia. There are grounds for believing that the Canadian field was in some ways riper for the harvest than the much-worked American Middle West. American immigration had been given a definite check in the form of the quota system of 1924. The ministerial committee performed its

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1923), 19-23. Hereafter simply *Minutes*.

<sup>2</sup> The old church on 13th Avenue South and East Ninth Street was sold for \$20,000. A chapel, no longer in use, brought an additional \$3,000. The new building cost \$67,000. Annual rental receipts were expected to be \$7,350. Net annual income was computed at \$1,650. *Minutes* (1920), 32.

exploratory function well, but nothing came of the Canadian mission. The Board of Foreign Missions made clear that such a proposal was not within their province to consider, that it would have to be presented to the United Church of Canada for approval. Authorities of the Canadian church responded with kindness and encouragement. They allocated sufficient funds to their friends south of the 49th parallel for conducting a survey by automobile of the western provinces. Unfortunately, rain and impassable roads spelled cancellation of the exploratory trip.<sup>3</sup>

Long before expansion into Canada was contemplated, the question of complete merger with the Methodist Episcopal Church was aired. The precipitating factor, no doubt, was a memorial of the Eastern Swedish Conference addressed to the forthcoming General Conference of 1920. The memorial, an answer to an anti-foreign resolution passed by the Wisconsin Conference, caught the attention of the Norwegian-Danish brethren almost immediately. In the annual session of 1920 the Norwegian-Danish pastors adopted it unanimously. The memorial of the Eastern Swedish Conference read as follows:<sup>4</sup>

*Whereas* a feeling is making itself known in certain quarters of the Church and through the medium of the Church press and the circulation of a resolution from the Wisconsin Conference, "that the time has arrived when, in the interest of the Kingdom, the foreign language churches and conferences are no longer desirable nor essential to the program of kingdom extension, but are an unpatriotic waste of fundamental resources," we fear that a large percentage would join other foreign-speaking denominations. . . . The foreign-speaking Methodists have been as loyal as the English-speaking Methodists.

We believe that the dissolution of the foreign-speaking conferences without their consent is unconstitutional.

*Therefore*, we memorialize the General Conference of 1920 to appoint a strong and unbiased commission, including representatives of all the foreign-speaking groups affected, to study thoroughly the whole question of amalgamation and report to the General Conference of 1924.

<sup>3</sup> John G. Bringdale, "Vort Vaerk i Kanada" (Our work in Canada), *Evangelisk Tidende*, December 1, 1927. *Minutes* (1928), 43-44; report for the committee, composed of Gustav Kvisgaard, Ole Røhrstaff, and John J. Wang.

<sup>4</sup> *Minutes* (1919), 40-41.

A heated debate on the merger question appeared in successive issues of *Den Kristelige Talsmand* in 1919. Remarkable is the circumstance that the pro-merger argument was presented prominently by only one person, Jonas A. Jacobsen, a pastor then serving as financial agent for the Elim Home for the Aged in Minneapolis. He had several worthy opponents. In view of the fact that he was articulating some thoughts that would prevail more generally at a later time, it is well to examine his position, with the advantage of hindsight. His arguments may be summarized as follows: <sup>5</sup>

1. The overlapping of foreign-language conferences with American conferences was wasteful of men and means.

2. Decline had already set in, with a falling off of immigration and the loss of many good members by transfer to American congregations.

3. If the national government expected the Methodist Episcopal Church to help solve the problem of Americanization, the Norwegian-Danish branch should do its share.

4. Eastern Norwegian-Danish congregations and pastors had long been thriving within American conferences, with no handicap to the use of the Scandinavian languages.

5. The larger American conferences exerted greater influence and could also provide higher salaries and pensions for pastors.

6. Younger English-speaking pastors would have better opportunities in American conferences.

7. There would scarcely be any institutional losses. The bookstore had already been absorbed by the Methodist Book Concern. The *Talsmand* had always been under some control by the same agency. The Norwegian-Danish Theological School might continue as a department of Garrett Biblical Institute. The Deaconess and Woman's Home and the Elim Home for the Aged would not be affected.

<sup>5</sup> For Jonas A. Jacobsen's viewpoints see D.K.T., July 31, August 14, and September 11, 1919. Arguments against merger were presented mainly by Carl Frederick Eltzholtz (May 22 and August 7, 1919), editor Carl A. Andersen (August 21 and 28, 1919), and Bishop Theodore S. Henderson (October 30, 1919).

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8. The Norwegian-Danish fellowship need not be broken. In smaller groups a continuing unofficial association, as in the East, would be possible.

9. Finally, Methodist leaders, including some bishops, were counselling in favor of dissolution.

There were rebuttals to all of Jacobsen's arguments:

1. If conservation of pastors, district superintendents, and financial resources was the objective, let it be understood that the salvation of souls was of supreme importance, regardless of expense. While the original attitude of the American church had been encouraging, even to the point of apportioning mission funds generously, American Methodist leadership now regarded the Norwegian-Danish work as completed and unnecessary. But there remained much to be done.

2. Immigrants were still arriving. They could hardly be ministered unto in the English language. Moreover, the number of unchurched Norwegians and Danes in the United States warranted renewed efforts to win them to God and to the church. It was also noted that the total number of members in the Norwegian-Danish Conference had reached a high of 5,381, as reported in the session of 1918. (The all-time high was 5,449 in 1921, until the Eastern congregations were added in 1930)

3. American patriotism should not be substituted for, or equated with, Christianity. In any event, Norwegians and Danes had proved their loyalty to the country of their adoption, and they would continue to do so.

4. To be sure, the Eastern brethren had served within American conferences and had none of their own, but they were not satisfied. As Ottar Hofstad expressed it on one occasion, writing from the East, they felt as orphans scattered among relatives. Who could guarantee that American district superintendents would be sympathetic and understanding enough to give impartial consideration to the former Norwegian-Danish congregations and their spiritual leaders?

5. Conference claimants might not find the American pension



provisions to be adequate. Informal promises given at random by irresponsible members of American conferences or boards ought not to be relied upon.

6. To offset the advantages to English-speaking preachers (Jacobsen himself was quite fluent in English), those who lacked proficiency in the English might be severely handicapped in American congregational activities and in their new annual conferences.

7. Little need be said in reply to the statement that Norwegian-Danish institutions would not suffer. It was pertinent to mention, however, that the institutions were performing very useful functions and that they were not decadent. The bookstore, for example, was making good profits before being taken over by the Methodist Book Concern.

8. Concerning the matter of fellowship, if not of a communion of saints, enough thought had not been given to the effects of dissolution upon layfolk as well as clergy. The larger fellowship would be broken unless by great effort a regular publication, like the *Talsmand*, could be continued.

9. Bishop Henderson's consistent advice to maintain the foreign-language conference for an indefinite period should be heeded, rather than off-the-cuff advice from other high church officials.

Not to be completely spellbound by merger overtones, the annual conference session of 1919 gave its attention to routine matters and to results of the Centenary drive, which was far from routine. Despite rising prices and the ravages of the influenza epidemic of 1918, 24 of the 28 congregations on the Chicago District quickly went over the top, to repeat the wartime phrase from the Western Front. Said the district superintendent, "A conference in which one district alone in the course of three weeks lays nearly a hundred thousand dollars on the altar of the Lord as a freewill offering does not need to beg anyone for permission to exist." <sup>6</sup> As far as can be determined, committee reports to the annual con-

<sup>6</sup> *Minutes* (1919), 25.

ference had until 1919 always been given in Norwegian or Danish. Precedent was broken when two committees submitted their reports in English. In 1921 it was decided upon motion that all reports should be presented in Norwegian or Danish.<sup>7</sup> However, district superintendents had of necessity been reading their reports in English, to accommodate the presiding bishops. The reports in turn were translated into Norwegian for publication in the year books.

With the approach of the General Conference of 1924 the merger question again showed signs of life. When layman Lars Marum of Brooklyn Bethelship suggested a union of all Norwegian-Danish Methodists in a single organization, with perhaps a bishop chosen from their own ranks, former editor Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen countered, "The Methodist Church has not treated us so step-motherly that we have reason to turn our backs upon her." To the contrary, he feared that parsonage children and others would be lost to the Christian faith if the conference persisted in using the Scandinavian languages.<sup>8</sup>

Wilhelmsen's warning did not directly involve the question of dissolution, but editor P. M. Peterson responded to it by introducing on the conference floor a resolution to the effect that the conference refuse to consider dissolution for the time being. With speakers being limited to ten minutes each, and the morning session extended to 1 p.m., a standing vote was finally taken with 41 in favor and none against. The one-sidedness of the decision should not be interpreted to mean complete unanimity.<sup>9</sup>

The *Talsmand* and the *Tidende* reflected the shifting scene, with signs of American leanings. A change from Teutonic to Roman type (November 6, 1919) would appeal to the young people, it was hoped by Wilhelmsen, who was returning to the editor's office for a year (1919-20). For the first time the young people's column was printed in English (December 25, 1919), and regularly thereafter.

<sup>7</sup> *Minutes* (1919), 33-34; (1921), 24.

<sup>8</sup> *Evangelisk Tidende*, June 21, 1923. (Hereafter E.T.)

<sup>9</sup> *Minutes* (1923), 14. E.T., October 18, 1923.

Following P. M. Peterson (1920-25) came H. K. Madsen (1925-26), generally counted more effective in the pulpit. *Ugens Prediken* (the sermon of the week) appeared faithfully, with the help of several pastors. There were fewer front-page illustrations. Sankner wrote often and well, as usual. The 75th anniversary of the Cambridge congregation was duly recognized. C. August Peterson sketched the history of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the Far West.<sup>10</sup>

C. A. Andersen returned to the editorial office for a four-year term in 1926. His task was not easy. The Western Conference had recently requested a change in editorial policy. Whereas *Vidnesbyrdet* had been vital to the conference on the Pacific Coast, *Evangelisk Tidende*, they said, was not meeting the needs of their people. For a time Frederick Engebretsen contributed regularly to the *Tidende* a column headed "Fra Vesten" (from the West), meanwhile continuing publication of *Sambaandet* after C. J. Heckner dropped it. In 1930 the Western committee on publications (H. P. Nelsen and C. August Peterson) reiterated their plea. The *Tidende* should be more than a religious journal, they believed. It should possess the freshness of *The Christian Advocate*, with up-to-date stuff directly from the field. It should be mailed in time to reach West Coast subscribers on the date of publication. They also suggested to Engebretsen that *Sambaandet* should be published regularly or not at all and that he should not give the impression of its being an official Western Conference newspaper.<sup>11</sup>

Temporarily the *Tidende* preserved its Norwegian character. There were occasional reports in English of "Win-My-Chum" meetings. There were letters in English from the foreign mission field. A sign of recreational interest, and Americanization, was the announcement of basketball games in February, 1930, between Racine Trinity and Chicago Kedzie, as well as between Racine Bethany and Cambridge. Meanwhile the Kuriko ads came back, after an absence of eight years. A fatal illness necessitated Ander-

<sup>10</sup> E.T., September 9 and 23, 1926.

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes*, Western Conference (1926), 13; (1930), 30.

sen's resignation (April 17, 1930). David Helikson and John M. Beckstrom, already preoccupied with pastoral duties with their respective flocks, stepped helpfully into the breach until conference time.

During Beckstrom's editorship (1930-33) four pages in English were regularly published, taken from *The Christian Advocate*. Church school lessons, Epworth League topics, and daily devotions were thus brought more surely to the attention of children and youth, explained Beckstrom. The paper changed from weekly to semi-monthly on July 1, 1933. Subscription troubles prompted a conference pledge to the Methodist Book Concern to increase the number to 1,200, a figure reached and surpassed by 1935.<sup>12</sup>

Sigbjørn Fosdal received the nomination of the cabinet (the bishop and the district superintendents) and the approval of the Methodist Book Concern in 1933. The position was far from lucrative. Editors were then full-time pastors who received only \$300 a year for their *Tidende* responsibilities. Fosdal served for one year, to be relieved by Beckstrom, also for one year. The Methodist Book Concern withdrew its financial support in 1934. Henceforth any deficit must be paid by the conference. From eight pages in 1935, equally divided between Norwegian and English, the *Tidende* went back to twelve pages in 1936, under Ole Røhrstaff. Indicative of a growing desire was a proposal of the publishing committee in 1936, that more prominence be given to the English section, with a front page in English as often as possible.<sup>13</sup>

In the summer of 1937 Øistein Kahrs, pastor of Chicago Bethany, came to the aid of Røhrstaff, who was suffering from an incurable illness. Kahrs was the official editor to 1943. In an early issue (November 4, 1937) he featured Gunnar A. Bloom, master printer, who for 17 years had set type for the *Talsmand* and the *Tidende*. A sign of the forthcoming merger appeared in T. O. Firing's front-page discussion (July 29, 1937) of the Methodist

<sup>12</sup> E.T., September 15, 1932. *Minutes* (1933), 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Minutes* (1934), 23 and 48-49; (1936), 62.



plan of union and its implications for the Norwegian-Danish Conference. In 1940 *The Gospel Advocate* replaced *Evangelisk Tidende*. Edward Evensen, who had served as business manager, since 1933, continued in that capacity. Subscriptions for the eight-page twice-monthly *Gospel Advocate* ran well over 1,100, but many were slow to renew. A publication commission composed of four pastors and two laymen recommended, in 1941, the reelection of Kahrs and Evensen and, at the modest editor's suggestion, a salary of \$10 per issue.<sup>14</sup>

In keeping with attitudes and actions of the past, the faithful of Norwegian-Danish Methodism were enjoined to apply their energies in the direction of a saloonless world. It was not enough that prohibition had been incorporated into the law of the land. A pastoral colleague, O. J. Bagne, who for the past ten years of his active ministry (1920-30) devoted himself to the work of the Anti-Saloon League, was commended from time to time. From the Minnesota field he moved in 1928 to North Dakota, to become assistant superintendent. Having come from Norway at the tender age of three, Bagne manipulated the English language with ease. The year 1928 seemed especially crucial in temperance history. As Hans A. Ofstie put it in his Minneapolis District report, "Such men (meaning Bagne) are needed in these damp days when the ghost of the damnable liquor business tries to drag its slimy body into the President's chair at the White House." Al Smith, governor of New York and Democratic presidential candidate, did not sit well with Protestants or with the dries.<sup>15</sup>

A greater threat to prohibition came with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his "happy days are here again" theme in 1932. Momentarily editor Beckstrom was also perturbed over William Hale Thompson's acceptance into the fellowship of Chicago's Thoburn Methodist Episcopal Church. The onetime mayor insisted that he was still wet, because the Bible is wet. Beckstrom expressed profound regret over Roosevelt's election. Repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1933 moved the committee on temperance

<sup>14</sup> *Minutes* (1941), 18 and 39. In the final issue of *The Gospel Advocate* (June 24, 1943) Gunnar Bloom expressed his appreciation to Kahrs and former editors.

<sup>15</sup> *Minutes* (1919), 33; (1928), 25.

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and reform to state, "We have lost a great battle, but the war is still on." Later the conference adopted a resolution requesting President Roosevelt to keep his promises to control drinking and to protect dry territories.<sup>16</sup>

Norwegian customs and costumes were fading into the background in most congregations. A 1930 picture of the Evanston (Our Saviour's) choir in Norwegian 17de Mai dress was perhaps the last of its kind to be published in the *Tidende*. On the other hand, considerable attention was paid to national and international affairs. Ofstie and others criticized the immigration quota established by act of Congress in 1924. Why Uncle Sam should reduce the annual flow of Scandinavian immigrants to a mere trickle (2% of the nationals of foreign lands, based upon their numbers in the United States as of 1890) they found it hard to understand. Courage was shown by Beckstrom when in 1931 the Congress designated the "Star-Spangled Banner" as the national anthem, replacing "America," which was sung to the tune of "God save the King." With a wave of Anglophobia prevailing, partially because of Britain's reluctance to pay her share of the Allied war debts, the change was thought to be for the better. Beckstrom doubted the wisdom of changing. Musicians were not exactly pleased over it, he explained, because of the new anthem's impractical scale. Only ladies' voices could be heard on "the rockets' red glare." Furthermore, Beckstrom volunteered, the second stanza, with its "foe's haughty host," a clear reminder of the enmity of the British in the War of 1812, might better be left unsung, especially at peace conferences.<sup>17</sup>

The subject of disarmament was aired in the *Tidende* and in conference resolutions. A plea in the *Tidende* on the eve of Armistice Day, now Veterans Day, in 1930 was accompanied suggestively by a full front-page illustration of a military cemetery. In 1931 the annual conference urged President Hoover to appoint a representative to a forthcoming disarmament conference. While Beckstrom called for strong moral support for the League of

<sup>16</sup> E.T., April 14 and November 24, 1932. *Minutes* (1934), 48; (1935), 13.

<sup>17</sup> E.T., June 26, 1930; March 19, 1931. *Minutes* (1926), 24.

Nations in its efforts to stem the tide of Japanese advance in Chinese-owned Manchuria, the conference was approving membership of the United States on the World Court, the judicial arm of the League. They also memorialized the General Conference to the effect that Hoover should be commended for his wise statesmanship in declaring a one-year moratorium on war debts and for advocating definite steps toward disarmament. The memorial further suggested that the president should use his good offices in securing a revision of the controversial war-guilt clause of the Treaty of Versailles, a clause which had saddled Germany with sole responsibility for the war.<sup>18</sup>

At that point Beckstrom raised the ominous question in his editorial (June 16, 1932) whether the Hohenzollerns, through President Paul von Hindenburg, were about to be restored to power in Germany. There were anxious moments aplenty when Adolf Hitler and his National Socialists usurped the leadership on Hindenburg's death in 1934. The end result was wholesale violation of the rights and territory of neighboring powers by a fanatical German government. Ultimately, even unoffending Denmark and Norway, both neutral in the First World War, were to fall under the overwhelming armed might of the Third Reich. As spokesman for the Minneapolis District in 1941, Halvard Folkestad pointed despairingly to the plight of the Scandinavian lands:<sup>19</sup>

Dark shadows have been cast over us as a Norwegian-Danish people. For a thousand years our past has been that of a free people, and our future linked to the freedom of nations. . . . That freedom shall again be ours.

No congregation escaped the dire consequences of the war. Chicago's Bethany might serve as an illustration. Behind the warm leadership of the parsonage couple, Øistein and Ragnhild Kahrs, the congregation soon busied itself with Norway relief activities. For the Kahrses, originally of Bergen, Norway, and for other Danes and Norwegians in Bethany the German occupation of the Scandi-

<sup>18</sup> E.T., November 6, 1930; December 3, 1931. *Minutes* (1931), 17 and 50.

<sup>19</sup> *Minutes* (1941), 25.

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navian lands lent sanctity to the longing for Allied victory. Christian and American flags were dedicated in 1942. News of the first fatality arrived in the same year: Thomas Gundersen killed in action in North Africa. A service flag, dedicated in 1943, carried 31 stars. The Sunday morning worshippers preferred to sing "Come, peace of God." Another sad report: Curtis Craig killed in action. At last the war ended, with 49 stars in the service flag. There were special services of praise and thanksgiving on V-E Day (May 8, 1945) and V-J Day (August 14, 1945). The color and light of new stained glass windows helped to dispel the anxiety and darkness of five long years.<sup>20</sup>

The Americanizing process affected, to some extent, the institutions of Norwegian-Danish Methodism during the period between wars. The trend away from the old language was nowhere more marked than in the Evanston seminary. A report of 1926 complained that congregational giving, so generous to Methodist enterprises as a whole, was far from adequate to maintain the pre-ministerial educational program. The Norwegian-Danish Conference, it was stated, ranked third in all Methodism in per capita giving, which totalled \$18,473. Of that amount, \$3,265 was allocated to the Board of Education, but only \$2,300 was raised for the Norwegian-Danish Theological School.<sup>21</sup>

In the planning stage, however, was a major change. A Bible School, operating concurrently with the seminary, was announced in 1932. While no new students had been admitted for the past two years, and only one class of seminarians remained to be graduated, the full four-year course of studies still appeared in the year book of 1932. Very noticeable was the scarcity of Norwegian book titles (8) and the larger number in English (29).<sup>22</sup>

T. O. Firing continued as principal of the theological school until it closed in 1934, and of the Evanston Bible School, which

<sup>20</sup> *Sixtieth Anniversary of the Bethany Methodist Church, 1898-1958* (Chicago, 1958). Although Japan surrendered on August 14, the date of V-J Day is officially September 2, 1945.

<sup>21</sup> *Minutes* (1926), 36-37.

<sup>22</sup> E.T., September 15, 1932. *Minutes*, Western Conference (1932), 34. *Minutes*, Norwegian-Danish Conference (1932), 75-76.



was absorbed into the Evanston Collegiate Institute (now Kendall College), a new junior college, in the fall of 1934. Active as trustees in the final years of the seminary, from about 1920 on, were the pastors Hans C. Munson, Hans K. Madsen, and John M. Beckstrom. Madsen served as chairman of the board for about 20 years. Faithful as laymen were Thor H. Loberg, James Christensen, Charles S. Anderson, M. E. Mickelsen, John M. Stahr, William R. Henriksen, and P. C. Clemensen.<sup>23</sup>

In the summer of 1934 Principal Firing announced, in Norwegian, a new plan in the *Tidende*. Successful overtures for a merger had been made to the trustees of a Swedish institution similarly circumstanced, the Wesley Academy and Theological Seminary, likewise located in Evanston. After conferring with the Board of Education and the University Senate of the Methodist Church, the two Scandinavian boards of trustees decided to pool their resources and to establish a junior college, the Evanston Collegiate Institute. The college opened its doors to 34 students, who studied in Wesley Hall, which was still held by the board of the former Swedish seminary. It was located at 2408 Orrington Avenue. The Norwegian-Danish building at 1830 Sherman Avenue served mainly as a men's dormitory.

In its report to the annual conference session of 1934 the board of trustees explained that several important men in the denomination had given generously of their advice in formulating plans. Among them were Thomas F. Holgate, dean emeritus of the Liberal Arts College of Northwestern University; William J. Davidson, secretary for educational institutions of the Methodist Board of Education; Frederick C. Eiselen, executive secretary of the Board of Education; and President Walter Dill Scott of Northwestern. The University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church approved the plans and named Holgate and Davidson as advisers.

The original administrative officers and faculty of the Evanston Collegiate Institute are here presented as a matter of record,

<sup>23</sup> *Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 65.

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recognizing that many excellent teachers joined the staff later: <sup>24</sup>

President .....	T. Otmann Firing
Dean .....	William W. Nelson
Music .....	Hilda S. Miller
Speech .....	Dorothy Proesch
Religious Drama .....	Dorothy Proesch
English .....	Leslie C. Tihany
Psychology .....	F. J. Edwards
Church History .....	F. J. Edwards
History .....	Arlow W. Andersen
Mathematics .....	Arlow W. Andersen

President Firing also taught Bible and Norse, while Dean Nelson, an ordained minister from the Swedish connection, gave courses in Religious Education, Economics, and Sociology. Mrs. Miller, the wife of a Swedish pastor, contributed through her cultivated voice and buoyant personality. Miss Proesch, a cultured woman of great dependability in social as well as academic affairs of the college, was the first counsellor of women. She also conducted a private speech studio in Evanston. The position of counsellor of women was since held, for many years, by Mrs. J. L. Hirning, the former Alma Letbetter, who also taught French and Psychology. The winsome and mentally quick Mr. Tihany, of Hungarian origin, was working toward a doctorate at Northwestern University. Over the years many Ph.D. candidates would serve on the faculty for longer or shorter periods of time. Edwards, a young Swedish pastor, also doubled as librarian.

As teacher and registrar for the first eight years, the writer carries many pleasant and stimulating memories of the joint Scandinavian venture in higher education on the freshman-sophomore level. The college operated, and still does, on the self-help principle. That is to say, students worked their way to meet the modest financial demands. All classes were scheduled for morning hours, leaving afternoons and evenings for study and for available employment. Evanston homes, requiring young women for housework and sometimes cooking, opened opportunities for many a

<sup>24</sup> E.T., August 23, 1934. *Minutes* (1934), 35-36.

student who had arrived with very few dollars. Men were placed as janitors, store clerks, and in other similar occupations. The spiritual, moral, and mental qualities of the young people were high. Most came from American or Scandinavian Methodist homes. Gradually the more diversified Evanston and North Shore community came to be more strongly represented in the student body. Many are active today in important businesses and professions. A large percentage are in full-time service as pastors, pastors' wives, missionaries, teachers, and church workers. Wesley M. Westerberg, son of one of the leading ministers of the former Swedish Conference, has served with distinction as president since Firing's retirement in 1954. However, the president emeritus has continued with the college in a public relations and financial capacity.

While much of the later history of the Evanston Collegiate Institute and of Kendall College belongs to the period after the merger of Norwegian-Danish Methodism, it may be appropriate to relate the sequel to its founding, beyond the chronological limits of the present chapter. In 1938 the Norwegian-Danish Educational Society (the name was preserved) gladly announced the recognition as an approved junior college by the University Senate of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Approval carried with it a strong recommendation urging enlargement of the faculty, the library, and the physical plant. Full accreditation by the University Senate and by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools came in 1962.<sup>25</sup>

The later history of Kendall College is a thrilling tale. Beset with financial challenges, the college could nevertheless look forward to a promising future. Following are some of the highlights of recent years for a school which was born of Scandinavian Methodism, accommodated itself to American Methodism, and to a significant degree has become interdenominational and cosmopolitan. In this remarkable story there are several leading characters, including President Westerberg himself. A graduate of Northwestern University, he later studied at the Union Scandi-

<sup>25</sup> *Minutes* (1938), 37. *Kendall College Bulletin* (March, 1962). *The Evanston Review*, March 29, 1962.

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navian School of Theology at Gothenburg, Sweden, at Drew Theological Seminary, and at Yale Divinity School. While serving as pastor of nearby churches in the Rock River Conference from 1939 to 1944, he taught courses in Bible and Philosophy of Religion at the Evanston Collegiate Institute. Westerberg is presently occupied in writing a book-length manuscript on the history of Swedish Methodism in America, which parallels at many points the development of its Norwegian-Danish counterpart.<sup>26</sup>

Very active in the total effort was Raymond I. Geraldson, chairman of the board of trustees. Formerly of Racine Trinity, this lawyer son of Gerald Geraldson, prominent lay minister of Racine, had the honor in 1958 of accompanying, as legal adviser, a friendly-relations seminar to the Soviet Union and its satellites under the Board of World Peace of the Methodist Church.<sup>27</sup>

Likewise of invaluable assistance in the support and promotion of the college has been Charles S. Anderson, another stalwart of Racine Trinity. Known since 1935 to his business associates as president of the Belle City Malleable Iron Company, to the college family "Charlie" is the longtime secretary of the board of trustees. Retired in 1961 as president of his company, he continues as chairman of the board of directors. In American Methodism he holds membership on the Board of Missions. His interest in the college in its beginning years may have made the difference between success and failure.<sup>28</sup>

Assisting and sustaining more and more are the alumni. An outstanding instance is that of Norman C. Anderson's gift of a considerable number of shares in Infrared Industries, Incorporated, of Waltham, Massachusetts. Anderson went on to earn an M.S. degree, majoring in Physics, at Northwestern University, then continued in graduate studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He and a partner organized the above-mentioned firm, which specializes in the manufacture of infrared sensitive photoconductors for industry and for the military. Norman An-

<sup>26</sup> *Fellowship News Bulletin* (July-August, 1954).

<sup>27</sup> F.N.B. (July-August, 1954; May-June and July-August, 1958).

<sup>28</sup> F.N.B., January-February, 1960.



derson came to Evanston from his home in Ludington, Michigan, where through the local church he had been influenced by fellow Norwegian Methodists.<sup>29</sup>

On the enrollment side, Kendall College has enjoyed nothing but progress. The number of students doubled in the five-year span from 1953 to 1958, quite some time before the anticipated G. I. baby boom in institutions of higher learning. Over 300 students registered in the fall of 1961. A recent survey shows that 67% of Kendall's graduates have pursued their studies in senior colleges, with bachelors' degrees in mind. This percentage is recognized as being far above the average for junior colleges, whether private or public, and speaks well for the determination and scholastic ability of Kendall alumni. So encouraging has been the growth of the college that a five-year plan of 1958 was set aside in 1961 in favor of a ten-year plan envisioning \$5,000,000 to cover costs of construction of a residence hall, a new classroom and administration building, renovation of old Wesley Hall, and enlargement of the endowment fund.<sup>30</sup>

Honors have come to the college, and the college in turn has recognized the distinctive achievements of some of its most deserving sons and daughters. In 1960 President Westerberg was appointed to the Commission on Administration of the American Association of Junior Colleges and was elected president of the National Association of Methodist Junior Colleges. Illinois Wesleyan University awarded him an honorary doctor of divinity degree in 1962. Representative of alumni who have been selected by their alma mater for special honors is Hal G. Aulie, an eminent surgeon of Royal Oak, Michigan. He was of Norwegian Methodist background from Detroit. Others of like quality and accomplishment in various fields of endeavor could be mentioned.

Notable among the donors, who must also be listed among the honored, is the late Harry R. Kendall, who willed \$100,000 to the college that since 1950 has borne the family name. Mr. Kendall wished to establish a living memorial to his son, Curtis P. Ken-

<sup>29</sup> F.N.B., September-October, 1957; July-August, 1960.

<sup>30</sup> F.N.B., May-June, 1958; January-February, 1961.

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dall, whose life was cut short at an early age. In this purpose he and his brother, George R. Kendall, concurred, each giving \$25,000 to establish the Curtis P. Kendall Foundation. The two brothers, co-benefactors of the college, founded the Washington National Insurance Company of Evanston. George Kendall, whose benefactions extended to several colleges, was presented a certificate of meritorious service to higher education by Kendall College recently.<sup>31</sup>

The international character of Kendall College captures one's attention and admiration. Although 55% of the students of 1961-62 were from Evanston and the wider North Shore community, 8% came from abroad, many of them from Asia and Africa. In this respect Kendall led the 21 Methodist junior colleges. One Methodist mission in Sumatra had sent 18 students from that island off the southeast coast of Asia, of whom five were in attendance in the fall of 1961. Evanston Methodists were sponsoring a young man from Southern Rhodesia. And, after the tragic news of Dag Hammarskjöld's martyr-like death in Africa on a United Nations mission, the student body took the initiative in raising funds for the establishment of a scholarship in his memory, to be granted to a student from Sweden.<sup>32</sup>

The Deaconess and Woman's Home and the Elim Home for the Aged also underwent a bit of transformation. The work of the Deaconess and Woman's Home continued in the 1930's under the able superintendency of Emma Linderud and her faithful co-worker Petra Olausen. Funds resulting from the will of George Alexander Hamilton made possible the payment of the remaining indebtedness on the new building and the remodeling of a large cottage at Des Plaines Camp Grounds, where Chicagoland Methodists gathered each summer for devotional and evangelistic uplift. A smaller cottage had been purchased there in 1923.<sup>33</sup>

The depression brought heavy demands for relief work, for which thousands of dollars were spent. In this important service

<sup>31</sup> F.N.B., May-June, 1958; November-December, 1960.

<sup>32</sup> F.N.B., September-October and November-December, 1961.

<sup>33</sup> *Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 71-73.

the deaconesses were assisted by Sigrid Johnson Nelson and Gunda Gill Kolberg. Some 300 meals were served monthly to men who came to the door and asked for food. But there was the other function as well. In the words of a later superintendent, Borghild D. Halvorsen, thousands of women at one time or another considered the institution on the near northwest side their home during the third of a century from 1910 to 1943. They came from all parts of the United States and from Canada, as well as from European countries, mainly Denmark and Norway. The Misses Linderud and Olausen retired in 1941. Miss Olausen still resides in California. Miss Linderud died in 1951. Her translation ended a beautiful and self-sacrificing life which she began as an active Epworth Leaguer in Stoughton, Wisconsin. She carried on in her ambition despite a spinal ailment that often proved troublesome.<sup>34</sup>

A 40th anniversary celebration in 1950 offered occasion for some reminiscing by M. E. Mickelsen, chairman of the board, who was presented with a Bible in recognition of his 14 years in that office. Mickelsen recalled the names of Thor H. Loberg of Evanston and others who had served in the past. Loberg, married to Della Haagensen, daughter of the pioneer pastor and editor Andrew Haagensen, had served as board chairman from 1913 to 1930. Present on this anniversary occasion was Josie Hansen of Chicago Asbury, still treasurer and bookkeeper after 20 years. The Chicago pastors, who frequently held their meetings in the same place, also attended. All in all, it was a stimulating evening for the new superintendent, Borghild D. Halvorsen, who succeeded Lorna M. Faust. Miss Faust, who had previously been attached for many years to the Morgan Park Church as deaconess, had retired after nine years (1941-50) at the home.<sup>35</sup>

In 1953 another residence building, the property of the German Baptists, was purchased. The annual tag day was always a great help. In 1956, for example, the sum of \$1,429.77 was collected by the plucky women volunteers who pre-empted important street corners for charity's sake. Christmas parties, with gift donations

<sup>34</sup> F.N.B., March-April, 1951. *Silver Anniversary Booklet* (1935).

<sup>35</sup> F.N.B., August, 1944; January-February, 1951; May-June, 1953; May-June, 1960. Loberg died in 1944, Mickelsen in 1956, and Miss Faust in 1960.

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for the needy, came and went regularly. A wistful note appears in one report: fewer and fewer of the holiday celebrants, residents of the home, were able to sing the Scandinavian carols. The old language had fled. Mrs. Halvorsen resigned as superintendent in 1959. One of the latest references to the Deaconess and Woman's Home states that Mrs. Marguerite E. Mayne now heads the institution under the name of Methodist Deaconess and Business Woman's Home. The two residence buildings provide 45 single rooms. Home cooked meals are served family style. The original function of providing a Christian and homelike environment for employed women is maintained.<sup>36</sup>

The Elim Home for the Aged, founded in Minneapolis in 1914, ministered increasingly to the needs of older folk who were for the most part connected with the Norwegian-Danish branch of Methodism. Destruction of the upper story by fire in 1920 presented an unexpected opportunity for remodeling and expanding. A third story was added, making room for 26 residents altogether. Especially active as president of the board was Emil Theodore Schollert for 23 years, until his death in 1938. His service was but a part of a long ministry. Inflammation of the hip in his boyhood days had crippled him permanently. Born in Denmark, he encountered the Methodists in Norway, in Tønsberg and Horten. In America he served many charges under pioneer conditions. Not only did he preside over Elim's board of trustees but he also held the office of treasurer of the Conference Board of Home Missions and Church Extension from 1915 until his death.<sup>37</sup>

If institutions are the lengthened shadows of men and women, other personalities merit special recognition. For many years Mrs. A. W. Hansen of St. Paul Aurora gave unstintingly of her talent and graciousness as secretary, until summoned by God to the eternal home in 1953. Martin K. Graning of Minneapolis First Church long served as treasurer. Schollert's successor as chairman was the versatile and omnipresent H. K. Madsen, whose acquaint-

<sup>36</sup> F.N.B., January-February, 1952; May-June, 1956; September-October, 1959; November-December, 1960.

<sup>37</sup> E.T., no date; probably in March, 1938. Schollert died on February 26, 1938. His daughter Alice was married to C. W. Schevenius, the writer of the obituary.



ance with affairs through long residence in Minneapolis augmented his usefulness. Mrs. Kristiane Hansen, as matron, did much to preserve the fine tone of the home.<sup>38</sup>

A hint of the changing times is seen in a statement from the historical sketch of 1943: "While the original plan was to establish a home for Norwegian-Danish Methodists, this has been modified so as to take in other groups as well." Financially the home was sound. In the year of merger with American Methodism Elim's property and assets were valued at \$54,000. Since the Minnesota Conference (American) had no home for the aged, Elim came to be recognized as a conference institution, with more applications than Elim could accept. Fortunately, the Harriet Walker Hospital Association, in which a pioneer lumber king, T. B. Walker, was a member, gave to the Elim Trustees its building at 3701 Bryant Avenue South. On November 5, 1945, twenty residents of Elim moved to the new address.

Martin K. Graning, treasurer continuously since 1925, states that Elim and the new Walker Methodist Home, named for Harriet Walker, combined their assets and that the institution now owns two buildings costing about \$1,500,000, and fully paid for. Three Norwegian-Danish pastors assumed duties on the board of the new Walker Methodist Home: H. K. Madsen, David Helikson, and Ottar Hofstad. Exodus 15:27 reads: "And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees, and they encamped there by the waters." By 1953 only two of the original 20 Elim residents, or transferees, remained. Eighteen had attained to the happiness of the greater Elim.<sup>39</sup>

Justice can hardly be done to the numerous activities and organizations of the period between 1925 and 1943. Something more than a mere listing is desirable. There was the Preachers' Aid Society and its parsonage auxiliary, *Familieringen* (The Family Circle). Incorporated in 1896, the Preachers' Aid Society solicited money and wills for the benefit of superannuated preachers and

<sup>38</sup> *Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943), 71.

<sup>39</sup> C. W. Schevenius, "Norwegian-Danish Methodism in Minnesota," in *Our Fathers Built*, 127-130. Martin K. Graning to A.W.A., June 12, 1962.

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their dependents. All conference members belonged. Asle Knudsen served nobly as financial agent (1896-1918) and as treasurer (1896-1930). H. K. Madsen succeeded Knudsen as financial agent (1918-1943), starting with about \$9,700 in the treasury. C. W. Schevenius became treasurer (1930-43). Edward Evensen served on the board (1920-43), much of the time as secretary. The first president was L. A. Larsen, the last Jan O. B. Skagen. In its 47 years of existence the society dispensed over \$20,000 to the veterans. Its holdings in 1942 totalled over \$50,000, most of that sum accumulated in small amounts. The big exception was a gift of \$5,500, a memorial to Mr. and Mrs. Martin Sanderson, parents of Mrs. Madsen.<sup>40</sup>

According to Mrs. Ole Røhrstaff, the last secretary, a group of ministers' wives organized *Familieringen* during the annual conference session of 1915 in Duluth, Minnesota. Inspired by Mrs. Gideon Olsen's report of an organization of that name among the Methodists in Norway, plans were completed for an annual meeting for discussion of mutual problems and interests of ministers' wives and for reports on funds collected for retired ministers. Daughters of the parsonage were later declared eligible to join their mothers in membership. During its life the society gathered some \$17,600, most of which was given to the Preachers' Aid Society and the conference stewards. Lesser amounts were occasionally given directly to preachers or their widows in special need. The following women served as presidents, in this order: Mrs. Hans A. Ofstie, Mrs. Halvard Folkestad (twice), Mrs. Sophus A. Norlemann, Mrs. T. Otmann Firing, Mrs. Edward Erickson, and Mrs. C. W. Schevenius.<sup>41</sup>

To promote the interests of the local church supplementary efforts were needed. There were, of course, the agencies of the Sunday school (later called church school), the Epworth League, the Ladies' Aid (later Woman's Society of Christian Service), the Woman's Home Missionary Society, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, the choir, the prayer meeting, and less frequently

<sup>40</sup> *Year Book* (1943), 68.

<sup>41</sup> *Year Book* (1943), 76. Mrs. Hans A. Ofstie to A.W.A., February 2, 1962.

the class meeting. But in addition there were district Epworth League conventions and summer institutes, choir festivals, and a laymen's league. Following the example of the Chicago District, where Lake Ripley Epworth League Institute had begun in 1916 just outside Cambridge, Wisconsin, leaguers of the Minneapolis and Red River Valley districts inaugurated similar programs of education and inspiration at Tipi-Wakan (Excelsior, Minnesota) in 1922 and at Hanging Horn (Barnum, Minnesota) in 1927. The two were merged into one, known as Hanging Horn, in 1932. Lake Ripley proceeded smoothly under various deans but with a single manager, Russell Olson of Racine Bethany. The choirs of Chicagoland joined in the first concert (May 25, 1933) at First and Immanuel Church. Organized as the United Choir, they performed regularly thereafter. Bishop Henderson is cited as organizing the laymen of the conference in 1923, but the Laymen's Loyalty League had its official beginning in 1932, according to a report of that year by the laymen in the annual conference.<sup>42</sup>

The forces making for Americanization became more pressing as the Norwegian-Danish Conference approached the end of its formal existence. Use of the Norwegian tongue was fast declining in the churches. The American *Methodist Hymnal*, actually not much different in spirit and content from *Evangeliske Toner*, was gaining in popularity. And the eyes of the clergy were directed realistically toward prospects for the future, for themselves and for their constituents. Yet on occasion attention was focussed with a combination of pride and gratitude upon past achievements, as when the conference met in historic Cambridge in 1936, and in 1939 in Racine Trinity, site of the dramatic organizing ceremony of 1880.

With news in 1938 of plans for a union of three great Methodist bodies, the tempo quickened. Anxiety was expressed that the Norwegian-Danish Conference would be hurt by a redrawing of area boundaries but, at the same time, the brethren voted unanimously in favor of union of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the

<sup>42</sup> *Minutes* (1922), 27; (1923), 43; (1927), 27; (1932), 57; (1933), 23; E.T., May 18, 1933.

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Methodist Episcopal Church South, and the Methodist Protestant Church of America.<sup>43</sup>

To vote in favor of inter-Methodist union was easy. To approve, even tentatively, absorption into American conferences was not. With nostalgic reluctance the session of 1939 in Racine adopted the following resolution, submitted by the committee on memorials: <sup>44</sup>

The Norwegian-Danish Conference respectfully petitions and memorializes the 1940 General Conference of the Methodist Church for an enabling act permitting the said Norwegian-Danish Conference, during the next quadrennium, to discontinue its organization and merge with contiguous English-speaking Conferences within the boundaries of the North Central Jurisdictional Conference.

John M. Beckstrom, delegate to the General Conference, brought word to his colleagues that the governing body of the church very willingly extended the life of the annual conference for another four years. Meeting in Ludington, the first and only session of the conference in the state of Michigan, the Norwegian-Danish delegates were further informed that the Fremont and Omaha congregations, neither of them strong, recently joined the Nebraska Conference, by action of the Uniting Conference. Recognizing the needs of the time, the pastors combined the Minneapolis and Red River Valley districts into one, to be known as the Minneapolis District.<sup>45</sup>

More and more the question of closing the work of the conference came to the fore. Congregations in Detroit, Michigan, and Forest City, Iowa, were inquiring in 1941 concerning the possibility of being accepted into the American conferences in their vicinity. In the annual session of 1941 some favored complete merger within a year. The conference rejected that proposal, however, and voted 45 to 15 to remain intact until 1944, when the

<sup>43</sup> *Minutes* (1938), 12 and 55.

<sup>44</sup> *Minutes* (1939), 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Minutes* (1940), 28 and 33. The plan of Union (1939) stated that a conference to continue must have at least fifty ministers in full connection. The Norwegian-Danish therefore required an enabling act for the next quadrennium.



next General Conference would be meeting. But the course of events moved rapidly. The brethren who arrived at Racine Trinity in May, 1943, realized that separate existence was coming to an end. The fateful resolution was at last adopted. It read in part as follows:

*Be it resolved* that at the adjournment of this annual session the Norwegian-Danish Conference be considered dissolved and is so dissolved. And that we give thanks to God for the glorious history of this Conference since its organization in 1880, in the same church in which its history closes. We revere the memory of saintly servants of God who have gone to their reward, and honor those who live among us as veterans of the cross. We who are in active service pledge our loyalty to God and Methodism in whatever field we may be appointed to serve.

Bishop Ernest Lynn Waldorf, who had presided at the annual sessions of later years, was forced to leave the conference session because of illness. His place was filled by Dr. Fred D. Stone, publishing agent of the Methodist Publishing House, at the suggestion of the bishop and by unanimous vote of the delegates. Many could join with Beckstrom in spirit when he inserted in his report for the Chicago District this thought: "As brother ministers we meet for the last time on earth. Never again will we all come together, as we are today. May the good Lord help us to be true to Him, wherever our lot is cast." The Norwegian-Danish Conference of the Methodist Church stood not adjourned but dissolved.<sup>46</sup>

It is interesting to review the final session of the conference through the eyes of editor Øistein Kahrs of *The Gospel Advocate*.<sup>47</sup> Skillfully Kahrs paints pictures of the climactic moments, from the initial festive appearance of the newly decorated sanctuary to the reading of the appointments. There stood the Christian and American flags flanking the pulpit, the Holy Bible in between. That the congregation was still young and vigorous was attested by a star-studded service flag, two gold stars among the 69. The various committees had outdone themselves to make the 90th anniversary of Trinity memorable and meaningful. Un-

<sup>46</sup> *Minutes* (1941), 9 and 13; (1943), 4, 7, and 11.

<sup>47</sup> *The Gospel Advocate*, June 10, 1943.

usually attractive was the printed program, a detail that did not escape the senses of the more artistically inclined.

After the Thursday evening anniversary service, at which Arne O. Nilsen spoke touchingly on "Only take heed unto thyself and keep thy soul diligently" (Deuteronomy 4:9), Bishop Waldorf, in evident physical distress, on Friday morning requested the singing of "Breathe on me, breath of God." Then he, together with the district superintendents, the local pastors, and others, administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Bishop Waldorf retired immediately to his hotel room, and never returned. Beckstrom presided until Dr. Fred D. Stone took the chair in the afternoon. Present were fifty delegates, ministerial and lay combined. Sigbjørn Fosdal was absent due to illness; he died the next year. The veterans John Lorentz, H. K. Madsen, and H. C. Munson were on hand. Greetings were brought from several retired members. Called forward were the widows of Ole Nielsen, Andrew Erickson, J. P. Andersen, Ole Røhrstaff, and J. C. Rynning. Melvin Olson of Seattle greeted the conference from the ministerial personnel of the former Western Conference, and Yngvar Johansen from the pastors in the East. Charles S. Anderson of Trinity invited the pastors to patronize the book table, one book each at his expense.

Edward Evensen announced for the publishing committee that all expenses of *The Gospel Advocate* had been met. He offered suggestions concerning future publication. The conference decided in favor of submitting the present mailing list to the *Christian Advocate*, the voice of Methodism in America, and of publishing a monthly bulletin. This purpose was carried out in the form of the *Fellowship News Bulletin*, which first appeared in July, 1943.

The statistician's report for the shortened nine-months year was gratifying. World Service givings had increased 30% over the previous year.<sup>48</sup> Ministerial salaries had risen, partly owing to

<sup>48</sup> Dr. Orrin Auman, World Service treasurer, informed editor Kahrs that the exact increase, with all reports in, was 38.76%. The average increase for all Methodist conferences was 11.9%. *The Gospel Advocate*, June 24, 1943. This was the final issue of *The Gospel Advocate*.

higher incomes made possible nationally through wartime inflation. The Woman's Society of Christian Service had raised over \$2,000, and *Familieringen* presented over \$800 to the conference stewards. Not without reason had C. W. Schevenius pointed out in 1939 that, financially speaking, the Norwegian-Danish Conference was, to say the least, a thriving concern.<sup>49</sup> These were his words, equally applicable to 1943:

In 1880 the value of church property was \$82,700. Now it is \$1,100,000. In 1880 the total giving for benevolent purposes was \$1,828; in 1938, \$24,683. In this period of fifty-nine years our churches have contributed about \$806,000 for disciplinary and benevolent causes. An enterprise that returns two dollars for every one that it receives cannot be called a liability.

With reference to personnel, gains and losses were registered in the session of 1943. Upon the advice of his physician, and due to a heart condition, Schevenius requested retirement, speaking briefly but warmly of his many-sided experiences in the ministry. Howard Slaatte, son of pastor Iver T. Slaatte, was admitted into full membership. James Swan Ferris and Robert Nelson Ruleman also joined but were transferred immediately to the Illinois Conference and the Northwest Iowa Conference, respectively.

The high point of this the 64th session, says Kahrs, was the Sunday afternoon service. Upon Dr. Stone's invitation the pastors came forward, stood within the chancel, and sang "Den Himmel-ske Lovsang," the hymn which had come to be identified with Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America. It is reproduced both in Norwegian and in English at the close of this chapter. After the first stanza had been sung, the audience arose and joined in the singing, many of them weeping unashamedly. For some, the earthly association was ended. For all, the hope and conviction of an eternal fellowship remained.

<sup>49</sup> *Minutes* (1939), 33.

## *The Spirit Triumphs*

CHAPTER 6 OF THE BOOK OF ISAIAH opens with these words: "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple." It soon becomes evident that the prophet is done with mourning over the death of a great king, who had reigned fifty years and who had made Judah central to the civilization of his day. Does not the man of God say that nations flowed to and from Jerusalem, which lay at the crossroads of three continents and several cultures? Others might have cried in despair that the end of an era had come, as well it did, but Isaiah looked to the future while cherishing a deep reverence for the past. To be sure, the earthly throne would seem to be empty after Uzziah's brilliant kingship, but the sovereign God still reigned supreme on the heavenly throne. Isaiah put his trust in one greater than Uzziah, and so may we, the descendants of Norwegian and Danish immigrants who lived nobly for God and for the Christian church.

While fortune does not favor many to duplicate King Uzziah's accomplishments, the loss of spiritual counselors of unusual stature is always felt. Such, for example, was the feeling when Andrew Hansen, the grand old man of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the East, departed this life. When friends gathered in Sunset Park Church of Brooklyn, New York, on November 4, 1950, to celebrate his 90th birthday anniversary no one expected that exactly one week later, on Armistice Day, his soul would have taken flight. Illness had prevented the presence of the distinguished guest at the festivities. To lend a touch of modern technology, a wire recording of his sickbed greeting was played in the church. Anders Emile, director of music in Sunset Park from 1920 to 1945, and now holding the same position at Hunter College, led the former choir members in the singing of "Og jeg saa en ny himmel" (And I saw a new heaven), recorded for Pastor Hansen's pleasure.

Lars Marum's sympathetic and understanding obituary tells of



Hansen's entrance into "the land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign." Many ministerial associates from other denominations and from Norwegian institutions were in attendance. During two world wars, and an intervening depression, this Christian warrior had stood as "a tower of strength to the weak, a friend and comforter to the afflicted." Born in Raade, Ostfold, Norway, he met the Methodists in Porsgrund and became a changed man. His official service to Methodism in America began with his admission to the Norwegian-Danish Conference in 1890. From 1910, when he came to Sunset Park, he remained a member of the New York East Conference. With his death had come, in a sense, the end of an era. Charles Wesley's immortal lines, which Marum cited in tribute, might well be applied to many soldiers of the Cross:

Servant of God, well done!  
 Thy glorious warfare past;  
 The battle's fought, the race is won,  
 And thou art crowned at last.

From the pages of *The Fellowship News Bulletin* it is convenient to trace the happenings of the post-conference years. The first editorial board was composed of three pastors: Oistein Kahrs, Arne O. Nilsen, and Asbjørn Smedstad. Edward Evensen, also a pastor, functioned as business manager. The first issue (July, 1943) announced that the subscription rate would be one dollar a year for this monthly messenger. Names of former subscribers to *The Gospel Advocate* were automatically on the mailing list.

In January of 1950 *The Fellowship News Bulletin* turned bi-monthly, in the interests of economy. At the same time the Historical Society, the only remaining organization with official standing from the onetime conference, assumed the responsibility of sponsoring the paper. Edward Evensen had replaced Arne Nilsen on the editorial board, when Nilsen began his longtime service to Central Church, San Francisco, in 1944. Central Church was merged with St. Paul's (German Methodist) in 1954. Nilsen continues as the kind and careful shepherd of the flock. Upon Evensen's death in 1956, T. Otmann Firing filled the editorial vacancy, while Mrs. Edward (Hannah) Evensen succeeded her husband

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as business manager. So ended a ministry of 45 years for Chicago-born Edward Evensen.

An incomplete roll call of former Norwegian-Danish pastors necessarily reveals the toll of the years. Succumbing to death in 1944 were Hans C. Munson, Sigbjørn Fosdal, and Nels Kolberg, in 1945 Peter Norlemann, in 1946 Lars Christian Knudson and Carl G. Gundersen, and in 1948 Gilbert Gilberts. Munson's span of years covered almost the entire period of the former conference. He arrived in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, from Skien, Norway, in 1881 and was graduated with the first class from the Norwegian-Danish Theological School. His last charge was Our Saviour's in Evanston (1928-30). Sigbjørn Fosdal, of Flekkefjord, Norway, was converted among the Norwegian Methodists in Stoughton, Wisconsin. His last appointment was Grace Church, Milwaukee.

Nels Kolberg of Sellebakk, Norway, emigrated with his family in 1921, leaving a grocery business and setting his sights on the ministry at the age of 36. Despite the lack of seminary preparation, Kolberg held together the Hartland-Martell-Viking circuit in Wisconsin for 22 years. Martell and Viking merged in 1941, learning the lesson of the automobile age with its improved highways. Another who entered the ministry by way of a secular occupation was a carpenter, Peter Norlemann, brother of Sophus Norlemann. He gave his last years to Salem Church, Everett, Washington, and was superintendent of the servicemen's center in that city.

The soft-spoken and gentle L. C. Knudson learned the shoemaker's trade in Norway, joined the Methodists in Christiania (Oslo), and came to Chicago in 1881. His earliest pastoral experience was as a missionary to Sheboygan and Manitowoc, Wisconsin. His last appointment was Minneapolis Bethlehem. He retired in 1918 and, in later years, resided in the home of his physician son, Dr. C. W. Knudson of Seattle. At his funeral a sextet of his former associates in the Western Conference sang his favorite hymn, of Swedish origin, which he had learned from the songbook of his boyhood days, *Israels Sange*: "Hvor jeg gaar i skog og bjerg og dale, følger mig en ven, jeg hør' hans røst" (Where'er I

walk, in forest and mountain and valley, There follows me a friend; I hear his voice).

C. G. Gundersen, born in Fredrikstad, Norway, served patiently and sacrificially in the Norwegian-Danish Conference from 1894 to 1936, at which time he retired and eventually moved to Roseville, California. Gilbert Gilberts (originally Gilbertsen), another Fredrikstad boy, found his spiritual peace among Methodists in Stanley, Wisconsin. Cambridge was his last charge. "Hvor jeg gaar" characterizes the lives of all of these pastors.

Several well-known layfolk also passed to their reward in the 1940's. Among them were Thor H. Loberg and John M. Stahr in 1944 and Anna Stahr Espinal in 1947. Loberg had long been identified with the International Harvester Company, in charge of foreign sales. His extended and enthusiastic services as dean of Lake Ripley Epworth League Institute, as chairman of the board of directors of the Deaconess and Woman's Home, and as secretary of the board of trustees of the Norwegian-Danish Theological School mark him as one of the invaluable persons of the church.

At the time of his death John M. Stahr held the office of comptroller of manufacture with the Western Electric Company. Born in Denmark, he came as a boy of eleven to the United States and eventually graduated second in his class from Rutgers University. His two sons have caught the inspiration of their father and their mother, the former Aagot Amundsen. One is a foreign missionary and the other an ordained minister.

Anna Stahr Espinal, sister to John, gave unsparingly of her alert and warm personality after 1924 to a children's home in Guatemala City, under the Central American Mission Board. In later years she and Amado Espinal, whom she married in 1939, maintained an independent evangelical mission in neighboring Honduras. So constructive have been Amado Espinal's efforts in the little village that the Honduran government once offered him the cabinet post of minister of education. His loving and industrious spirit was graphically portrayed in a magazine article describing his determination to supply piano music for his underprivileged

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congregation and community ("A Magic Piano for the Jungle," as related by James Savage to Alfred Prowitt, *Coronet*, August, 1949). Anna Stahr Espinal, like her brother John, was a cherished member of Chicago Asbury after 1916.

In the field of foreign missions there are many who have served or are serving. In addition to those mentioned earlier, there are Eva Hewitt, once of Hillsboro, North Dakota, and Emil Halverson, formerly of Brighton, Minnesota. Miss Hewitt has served in Pakistan for over 20 years. Rev. Halverson, now retired, gave of his spirit and energy to Brazil for 40 years. Doubtless his specialization in agriculture at the University of Minnesota, from which he graduated, supplemented his evangelistic ministry to good effect.

Some have been chosen for the dynamic continent of Africa. Elizabeth, daughter of Raymond and Mildred Hansen of Chicago Asbury, is active with her husband, Robert Hutchins, in Ethiopia under the Aviation Missionary Fellowship. Minneapolis Asbury owns the distinction of having two young couples in Africa under Methodist auspices. Wallace and Ruth Henk (the former Ruth Solvang) are laboring in the Congo, while John and Ruth Schevenius are located in Southern Rhodesia. A graduate in civil engineering John, son of C. W. Schevenius, supervises construction of churches, dams, schools, and hospitals and engages in evangelistic work. His wife (the former Ruth Amstutz) makes use of her degree in bacteriology in a hospital laboratory. John Brastrup, long supported by Norwegian-Danish friends, devoted himself to the Belgian Congo. He died in his native Denmark in 1954. Racine Trinity has since taken the lead in raising funds for a Brastrup memorial.

Under the exigencies of war several pastors entered the chaplaincy. Erling Edwardsen suffered wounds that eventually caused his death, in 1961. For many years after World War II he occupied the pulpit of the former Norwegian-Danish church in Ludington, Michigan. Stuart A. Joransen, son of C. A. Joransen, served in the Philippine Islands in the closing days of World War II. In 1959 he was one of several to accompany Harry P. Denman of the Board



of Evangelism on a mission to the Philippines and other lands. Clarence H. Lund was of immeasurable usefulness in Korea in the tragic days of 1951. In charge of all Protestant burials in the United Nations cemetery at Pusan, he also made numerous personal calls on men in the hospitals and on board ship. Martin Skarbo was promoted to lieutenant-colonel but has returned to the civilian ministry in the West. Major Daniel B. Jorgensen, a product of the Detroit congregation, is engaged in writing *Air Force Chaplains*, a history of the sky pilots.

Now retired and in his early eighties, Carl W. Schevenius is actively pursuing his life-long literary interests. One of his many recent accomplishments is the English translation of "Den Himnellske Lovsang" ("The Heavenly Anthem"), see p. 290. Born in Telemark, Norway, in 1881, he emigrated to America and settled in Stoughton, Wisconsin, where he first heard the call to the Christian ministry. Serving in the Norwegian-Danish conference continuously from 1906 till the dissolution of the conference in 1943, he held the pastorates in many of the leading churches and served on the faculty of the Norwegian-Danish Seminary in Evanston 1911-15. As district superintendent, first of the Chicago District and later of the Minneapolis District, he was tireless in his effort to maintain the use of the Norwegian language in the churches and to stem the tide of the growing sentiment toward amalgamation with the English speaking conferences. The conference honored him by election to the General Conference in Atlantic City in 1932, and again by electing him to the Uniting Conference in Kansas City in 1939.

Great festivity accompanied the 80th anniversary celebration for Hans K. Madsen on March 17, 1950, in Minneapolis Asbury, his own charge at one time. A program of music and congratulatory speeches was graced by a vocal solo by Olaf Olson, faithful over the years as director of the male chorus *Samhold*. Appreciated also was the artistic performance of C. Wesley Andersen, onetime organist and choir director in old First Church (now Asbury). He returned some years later to help dedicate a new organ. He has long been active as director of music in Roosevelt High School,

# The Heavenly Anthem

James R. Murray

Den himmelske lovsang

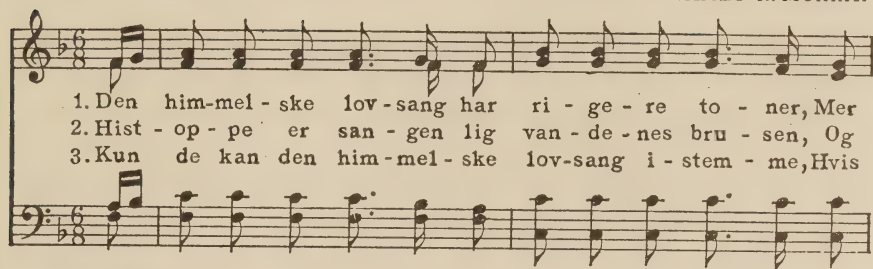
1. The - hea - ven - ly an - them has lof - ti - en swel - ling, more  
 2. Up - on - der the song is like roar of great wa - ters, an  
 3. On - ly those may par - take in the hea - ven - ly an - them whose

joy - ous and sil - ver - pure strain, than - all earth - ly mu - sic, though  
 hea - ven is filled with its sounds, The - glo - ri - fied spi - rits re -  
 Souls ob - tained par - don and rest; By - faith in Christ Je - sus, their

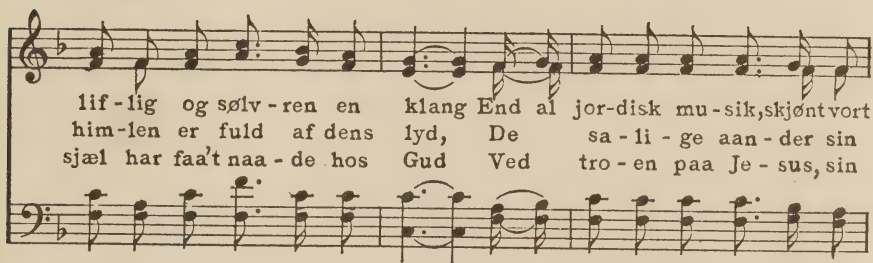
hearts beat in rap - ture when fo - rest and val - ley re - sound with re - frain.  
 joy in their Sa - vour, Ex - al - ting His name for the joy they have found.  
 pre - cious Re - dee - mer, they on - ly shall see Him and dwell with the blest.

Chorus oh glo - - - ri - ous an - - - - - them in God's - - - pa - ra - dise  
 . Oh glo - ri - ous an - them, glo - ri - ous an - them, an - them in pa - ra - dise

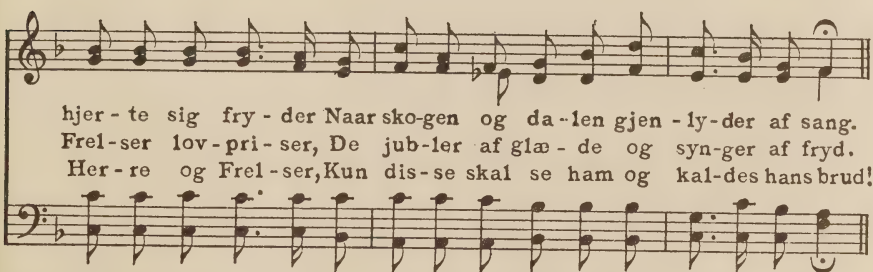
When hea - - - - ven's great hosts - - - - sing the song - - - - to His praise.  
 When hea - ven's great hosts, when hea - ven's great hosts sing the song to His praise.



1. Den him-mel-ske lov-sang har ri-ge-re to-ner, Mer  
 2. Hist-op-pe er san-gen lig van-de-nes bru-sen, Og  
 3. Kun de kan den him-mel-ske lov-sang i-stem-me, Hvis

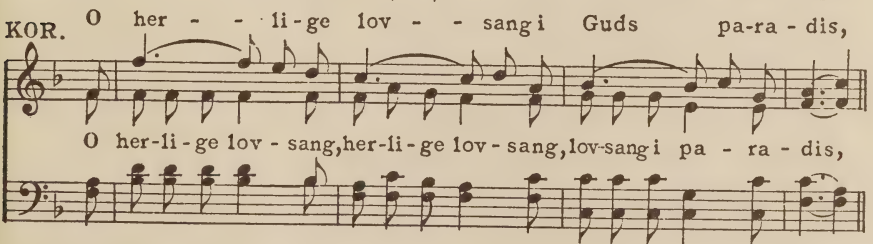


lif-lig og sølv-ren en klang End al jor-disk mu-sik,skjøntvort  
 him-len er fuld af dens lyd, De sa-li-ge aan-der sin  
 sjæl har faa't naa-de hos Gud Ved tro-en paa Je-sus, sin



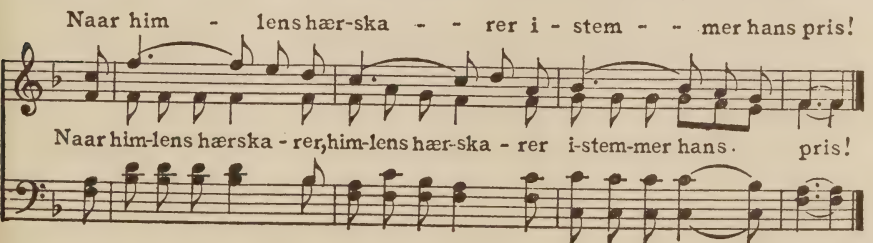
hjer-te sig fry-der Naarsko-gen og da-len gjen-ly-der af sang.  
 Frel-ser lov-pri-ser, De jub-ler af glæ-de og syn-ger af fryd.  
 Her-re og Frel-ser, Kun dis-se skal se ham og kal-des hans brud!

KOR. O her-li-ge lov-sangi Guds pa-ra-dis,



O her-li-ge lov-sang, her-li-ge lov-sang, lov-sangi pa-ra-dis,

Naar him-lens hær-ska-rer i-stem-mer hans pris!



Naar him-lens hær-ska-rer, him-lens hær-ska-rer i-stem-mer hans pris!

Minneapolis, and presently holds the position of director of music in the Minneapolis public schools.

Madsen's death in 1955 evoked a fitting eulogy, which was generously and eloquently delivered by his lifelong friend, ministerial colleague, and Lotus Lake neighbor, C. W. Schevenius. In addition to honors mentioned previously, the Board of Hospitals and Homes of the Methodist Church awarded Madsen a membership in the Methodist Hall of Fame in Philanthropy for his services to the Walker Methodist Home for the aged.

Undoubtedly one of the most inspiring events since the close of the conference period was the centennial observance of the founding of the congregation in Cambridge, Wisconsin. Included was a Saturday afternoon memorial service in the adjoining churchyard, where the remains of many conference pioneers are at rest. Presiding at this impressive ceremony was Daniel Helikson. The following former pastors with their wives were honored, geranium plants being placed upon their graves: Edward Peterson, Otto Sanaker, Henry Danielson, Carl Eltzholtz, Carl H. Josephson, Ole Røhrstaff, Nels Jacobsen, and Gilbert Gilberts. The assembled friends then moved into the sanctuary, where C. W. Schevenius delivered a sermon in Norwegian.

At the Saturday evening banquet in the Cambridge High School auditorium some 440 guests were gathered. From the detailed report in *The Capitol Times* of nearby Madison (May 7, 1951) it is learned that the banquet attendance set an all-time record in the community. Professor Rockwell Smith of Garrett Biblical Institute was the principal speaker. Russell Olson of Racine Bethany was general manager. Nels (Nip) Johnson, outstanding youth leader of Racine Trinity, performed as master of ceremonies. Included in the five-hour program were many participants. Dr. Smith lauded the strength and purpose which combined to make a success of Norwegian-Danish Methodism, starting in Cambridge, where the first Scandinavian Methodist church edifice in the world was erected.

With the younger men who graduated from the seminaries,



whether Norwegian-Danish or American, the editors of *The Fellowship News Bulletin* have succeeded in maintaining contact. Editor Kahrs himself belongs to this group. In 1962 he was appointed to his 34th year in Chicago Bethany, a record in the Rock River Conference. As the one remaining active pastor from the former conference now in the Rock River Conference, he serves a charge numbering over 400 members, with a Sunday school of like strength. The church structure which once resembled Noah's Ark (so it seemed to us as children) has come a long way, architecturally and otherwise.

Through Clarence Pettersen and others the news from Iowa has been kept up to date. In 1957 Cornell College of Mount Vernon, Iowa, honored Pettersen, conferring upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity for outstanding service to Iowa Methodism. After several years as superintendent of the Davenport and Mason City Districts Pettersen assumed the pastorate of Grace Church, Waterloo, with its 2,000 members and corresponding responsibilities. He is pleased with the work of his colleagues who came out of the Norwegian-Danish connection. Their appointments as of 1962 read as follows: C. Wilbur Egeland (Marathon), E. Morris Egeland (Oelwein), Sverre Hammer (Gilmore City and Rutland), James E. Albertson (Klemme and Liberty), George W. Brighton (Thornton and Swaledale), Godfred S. Bruland (Hawarden), Sherman L. Tidball (Paullina and Gaza), and Ellis Ulland (Lake Mills and Thompson). Richard Pearson (Crescent Park Church, Sioux City), grandson of the veteran J. P. Andersen, is among the group. Erling B. Falck served the Lake Mills parish until his untimely death in 1948. His widow Gudrun has since married Elmer R. Peterson, a retired Methodist preacher living in Lake Mills. The Petersons share in the annual Christmas party of the Iowa fellowship. Gerhard J. Hjelmaas, once pastor in Brighton, Minnesota, died in 1959 in Crystal Lake, Iowa, while serving that loyal congregation. Morris Kildal, after many years in South Dakota as pastor of the large Huron congregation and as superintendent of the Southern District, now serves Titonka and Doan in Iowa.

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From Minnesota and Michigan there comes news frequently also. Andrew A. Stave, for nine years in Marshall, Minnesota, and district superintendent for a term, has now retired. He attended the centennial celebration in Newburg, Minnesota, his former charge, in 1960. Alvin Nygaard, with a splendid record in Willmar, came to historic Simpson Church in Minneapolis. Harry Peterson retired because of illness. Likewise retired are Lee Paulson and Gustaf Eckhoff. John Miller is appointed to Fergus Falls, after eight years in Montevideo. Others active in the Minnesota Conference are Upton Dahle, Lloyd Asp (Hector), and Obed Asp (Alden). Sophus A. Norlemann, Jr., was transferred to the Southern California-Arizona Conference in 1962. Ottar Hofstad, officially in retirement and 75 years of age, serves Brookston. His has been a long and interesting road, from his first appointment to Norway, Illinois, in 1909.

In Michigan Otto Steen, one of the many to come out of Bethelship Church in Brooklyn, completed nine years in Escanaba and moved to Marine City, where he still serves. Erling Wangdahl (formerly Wang), also from Bethelship, is Detroit Conference treasurer, a permanent position to which he is admirably suited. Knut Severeid is pastor for Grace Church, Marquette.

When West and East come into focus, other familiar names appear. Martin T. Larson's report of 1962 covers appointments in the Pacific Northwest Conference, all in the State of Washington. He himself, after several years in Colfax, now serves the community of Lind. S. Christian Thele left the Crown Hill Church of Seattle for the Omak and Riverside charges. Clarence H. Lund, the former chaplain, has moved from Blaine to Allen, and Oscar A. Olson, once stationed in Unga, Alaska, labors in Leavenworth, Washington. Reappointed to their charges were Martin K. Skarbo (Castle Rock), Erling Bergan (Aberdeen's Central Park Church), and John P. Johnson (Pomeroy). Retired are Karl Ekaas, Hilmer Hanson, and Anfinn Strømme, as well as Roy Fedje, once pastor of Portland's Rose City Church in Oregon. Philip Solbjør began his third year in San Francisco Trinity, while Arne O. Nilsen began his nineteenth in San Francisco Central, to which he came on D-Day (June 6, 1944) from Chicago's Emmaus Church.

Sons of the parsonage, besides those cited elsewhere, have also done their part in the ministry. Omar Pettersen, son of Clarence Pettersen, is active in Bennett, Iowa, after graduating from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. Harold Peterson, son of P. M. Peterson and a Garrett graduate, occupies the pulpit of the Douglas Avenue Church in Springfield, Illinois. Rolfe J. Conrad, son of the late Carl Conrad, is now pastor of the First Methodist Church of Pacific Grove, California. Lynn Haver, son of Matthias Haver, continues as pastor in Fresno, California. Howard A. Slaatte, son of Iver T. Slaatte, and the last to be ordained elder in the Norwegian-Danish Conference, climbed the educational ladder from the Evanston Collegiate Institute (now Kendall College) to the University of North Dakota (B.A., cum laude) and Drew University School of Theology (B.D., cum laude and Ph.D.). A traveling fellowship enabled him to study in Mansfield College, Oxford University. As a pastor he served churches in Michigan, Brooklyn, and Long Island. Formerly Professor of Systematic Theology at Temple University, he is now Professor of Philosophy at McMurry College, Abilene, Texas. Slaatte has to his credit several scholarly articles and a recent book: *Time and Its End: A Comparative Existential Interpretation of Time and Eschatology* (Vantage Press, New York, 1962), in which he wrestles with Kierkegaard, Barth, Tillich, and Berdyaev. Stuart Joransen, son of C. A. Joransen, completed a long and successful pastorate in Windom, Minnesota, and is now serving a 1,400-member charge in the iron ore center of Hibbing.

The changing times have affected the Norwegian-Danish work in the East. Wesley Church in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, was sold and the members built a new structure in Ford, a Perth Amboy suburb. Trygve Fossen returned in 1960 to Centralkirken in New York, where the Norwegian language was still used to some extent in the services. Robert V. Howard, of American descent, returned to Sunset Park. Arthur S. Marshall, of partly Swedish ancestry, became pastor of Bethelship, once so strong as a Norwegian center. Ludwig Jansen, with 17 years in the Methodist ministry behind him in Norway, had come in 1946 to Bethelship, succeeding

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Yngvar Johansen, who had served Bethelship twice, from 1920 to 1925 and from 1935 to 1946. Jansen served there for 14 years. He was disappointed to see the Norwegian language gradually give way to the English.

Ludwig Jansen's year-long visit in Norway recalls the status of Methodism there, covered in part in his reflections written on board the *Queen Mary* on the return trip to New York ("Personlige Inntrykk fra Norgesbesøket," in *Kristelig Tidende* (Oslo), April 28, 1961). In *The Christian Advocate* (May 3, 1956) American Methodists were informed of the Norway centennial and given some facts concerning the strength of the denomination. The celebration, said the article, was to begin at Pentecost with a song festival. The climax would be reached in mid-September when representatives of the king, the parliament, the university, and the established Lutheran Church would pay their respects. Meanwhile the Norway Conference met in annual session in Oslo First Church and also celebrated the Sarpsborg beginning of 1856. Raymond Werner, long active as a pastor on the Pacific Coast, was thrilled to be present. Gone from Norway for 30 years, he was especially moved when in that church sanctuary the DePauw University choir of Greencastle, Indiana, sang "America the Beautiful." Meditating upon his many years in the new homeland across the sea, he thanked God for America.

A report of 1961 by Pastor Erling Selvén, superintendent of the Bethany Hospital and Nursing Home in Oslo, presents the statistical picture of Methodism in Norway:

Members in full connection . . . . .	8,229
Young people over 15 years of age . . . . .	6,662
Young people and children under 15 . . . . .	3,471
Members of the annual conference . . . . .	73

Total number of Methodists in Norway . . . . . 18,435

Number of Sunday schools . . . . .	72
Number of pupils and officers . . . . .	9,564
Number of young people's societies . . . . .	37
Members of young people's societies . . . . .	2,003
Number of young people's groups . . . . .	42



Members in young people's groups.....	1,230
Number of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.....	2,557
Number of junior scouts.....	996

In addition to the above, it might be stated that there are 65 churches and 40 outposts, 3 hospitals, 3 children's homes, and 3 homes for the aged. The Union Scandinavian School of Theology at Gothenburg (Göteborg), Sweden, under the able Rektor Dr. Alf Lier supplies well-educated pastors for the three Northern countries. Norwegian Methodists support some 30 foreign missionaries. Within their own country they are favored by the services of over 200 deaconesses.

The passing of many former pastors during the past decade should be noted. Among those "loved so long and lost a while" is B. E. Carlsen (1951) who, as an immigrant lad, joined the Bethel-ship fellowship. His last 40 years were lived in Boston, 17 as pastor of the Norwegian-Danish church there. He was a recipient of the medal of the Order of St. Olav, partly in recognition of his aid in founding and supporting a Norwegian old people's home.

Melvin Olson (1957), American-born and converted in an American camp meeting in Belvidere, Minnesota, gave of his talents to the Western Conference, beginning in 1918. Among his many good works was the collection of a considerable sum of money for the Methodist church in Norway after the German occupation of World War II. Others who succumbed in the West were Joachim G. Bringdale and Hans O. Jacobson (1958) and Emmanuel E. Nanthrup (1960), all members of the so-called sunset club which met on occasion in Seattle. Bringdale rendered effective service as an evangelist for 20 years. He was a trustee of Seattle Pacific College and of Cascade College of Portland, Oregon.

Hans O. Jacobson pastored several congregations, beginning with Portland in 1921. More than others he was active in holiness associations and in gospel missions. Nanthrup, from 1895 on, grew up with the Far West. From his original appointment, Los Angeles, his path led to Utah, to Alaska, and to British Columbia, where his work among Norwegian immigrants and seamen in

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Vancouver won praise from the United Church of Canada when he departed in 1937. For Nanthrup and his wife Helga, daughter of the late C. August Peterson, Ballard's Emmanuel Church became home thereafter. Emmanuel and Crown Hill merged in 1951 under the name of Crown Hill.

Yngvar Johansen's death (1958) brought to a close the earthly career of a poetic and musical soul who had labored in Norway, in New York (Bethelship), and in California, where he died. Born of Methodist parents in Oslo, his course led to pulpits in Bethelship (1920-25 and 1935-48), in Stavanger, Norway (1926-30), in Oslo's Centralkirken (1932-35), and in Los Angeles Bethany (1949-54), within the Southern California-Arizona Conference. In the words of his friend and colleague, C. W. Schevenius (*In Memoriam*, 1959, published by the Southern California-Arizona Conference), Johansen possessed a dignified yet dynamic delivery to enhance a profound knowledge of the Scriptures. His Bible lectures in Norway drew at times audiences of 1,800 listeners. King Haakon VII decorated him for his assistance in serving Norwegian sailors in Brooklyn during World War II.

The Middle West lost, among others, such veterans as John M. Beckstrom and Edward Erickson (1957), John Lorentz (1958), and P. M. (Peter Martin) Peterson (1960). Born in Sweden in 1873, Beckstrom began a long ministry in the Norwegian-Danish Conference and in the New York East Conference in 1903. From the superintendency of the Chicago District (1937-43) he moved to smaller retirement charges in Illinois. There was only one Beckstrom. His blending of piety and humor, of humility with a clear and audible delivery, and of biblical inspiration well buttressed with illustrations, made Beckstrom both interesting and effective in the pulpit.

Converted in his youth at the Des Plaines Camp Grounds, just outside Chicago, Edward Erickson spent the last of his 54 years in the ministry with the American congregation of North Prairie, Wisconsin. His service to the Norwegian-Danish Conference included several responsibilities: district superintendent twice, chairman of the Board of Stewards and of the Commission on

World Service and Finance, and secretary of the annual conference.

John Lorentz, who lived to be 91, devoted most of his active years to North Dakota and Minnesota. His influence was far-reaching. Hans A. Ofstie was converted through his preaching, much like that of the apostle John, who once said, "Behold the Lamb of God." In later years Lorentz, his body no doubt weary, visited prisoners in the Grand Forks city jail and won the respect of the ministerial profession in that city.

P. M. Peterson made the Atlantic crossing from Denmark at the age of 17 and settled first in Concord, Massachusetts. There through the influence of J. P. Andersen, another Dane, he decided upon the Christian ministry as his calling. The long trail led to his final appointment, Cambridge, Wisconsin (1939-44), where he also spent his retirement years. T. O. Firing in the obituary speaks of Peterson as a great admirer of his namesake among the disciples. "Like Peter, he was impulsive and forthright, vehement and tender." The sons and daughters who survive are making their mark in their respective congregations. For a number of years the eldest son, Ralph, has served as treasurer of Kendall's board of trustees.

A résumé of the activities of pastors and layfolk, once a part of the Scandinavian fellowship, has its points of intriguing interest and stimulation. Some examples may be given. Abraham Vereide, who first ministered to congregations in the West (Great Falls, Spokane, Portland, and Seattle), eventually came to Morgan Memorial Church of all Nations in Boston. But it was while serving as associate pastor of Seattle's First Church (American) that he was inspired to inaugurate a movement since known as International Christian Leadership, of which he continues to be executive director, with offices in the nation's capital. Seattle Pacific College awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree (LL.D.). Government and church leaders feted him on the occasion of his 75th birthday anniversary in 1961. Tribute in printed form has recently appeared in a biography and a history of the movement by Vereide's intimate co-worker, Norman Grubb,

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under the title, *Modern Viking: the Story of Abraham Vereide, Pioneer in Christian Leadership* (Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1961). The foreword bears statements of warm commendation by Senators Frank Carlson and Alexander Wiley, Congressman Charles E. Bennett, and Judge Boyd Leedom, chairman of the Labor Relations Board. Apparently Vereide continues to stress the breakfast devotional idea with which he began in the 1930's.

There were those who reached the 90th milestone. John Cokeen of Manistee, Michigan, did so in 1951, and Mrs. Fred (Jeanette) Amundsen of Chicago Asbury in 1956. Cokeen had been employed for 40 years in the pattern shop of an iron works. His membership in the local congregation covered 65 years. Jeanette Amundsen was a woman of generous spirit and poetic inclination whose original lines appeared at times in the publications of the church. Arriving from Drammen, Norway, at the age of 20, she eventually joined the Moreland (later Austin and Asbury) congregation in 1894. Less than three months separated her 90th anniversary from her death. Among her papers was found a translation of recent date from *Israels Sange*, originally from *Zions Sange*:

Tender and low, tender and low,  
Whispering hope to this old heart of mine.  
Blessed Lord Jesus, this voice must be Thine.

Olav Kvisgaard, still youthful and active in his middle seventies, can look back upon a ministry in many of our churches, including Evanston. Tireless in his promotion of the Norwegian language and culture, he is a prolific contributor to the Norwegian press. His twin brother Gustav, also a pastor, authored *Hjemlengsel* (Longing for Home), a novel of immigrant life depicting some of his own feelings. From his longtime residence in Calumet, Michigan, the copy was mailed to *Decorah Posten* in Iowa, where it was cast into columns and published serially in 1953. A realistic story is discoverable in Barbara Jurgensen's *Leaping upon the Mountains* (1960), a biography of Hollis Ofstie. A victim of spastic paralysis, Hollis maintained an ever cheerful and humorous disposition. The title derives from Song of Solomon 2:8.



Churches too underwent changes. Wesley Church of Valley City, North Dakota, was sold in 1948. Of the remaining members, 24 transferred to the American Epworth Church. Money from the sale (\$12,000) was applied toward the building of a parsonage for Epworth Church. Martell, in Wisconsin, observed a 100th anniversary in 1957. Des Plaines Camp Grounds did likewise in 1959. In the same year Ottar Hofstad celebrated 50 years in the ministry together with his new Brookston, Minnesota, congregation, also a half-century old. Racine Trinity looks hopefully ahead as one of five Methodist churches in that city. For a new structure a four-acre site has been purchased.

But some congregations, while full of gratitude for past victories, could not well continue. Bethel and Asbury in Chicago elected to close, in 1960 and 1961. In the case of Asbury, her generous supply of talent and Christian virtue seemed to be running out. The death of Josie Hansen may have caused some survivors to feel that the end of an era had come. For 50 years she was employed by an insurance company and for many years was an active member of the board of directors of the Deaconess and Woman's Home.

One encounters much news of a personal nature, and glimpses of the past appear. David C. Hassel in his advanced years substitutes as chaplain in an Oakland, California, hospital. The mind's eye can see Mrs. O. T. (Ellen S.) Field, widow of the beloved pastor, sitting in her apartment in Bellingham, Washington, marvelling each day at the beauty of Puget Sound and of Mt. Baker. One does not forget the faithfulness of church janitors, stewards, trustees, organists, and others. Peder Ringsrud of Minneapolis First Church (later Asbury), for example, often proved the loyalty of his trusteeship by repairing the plumbing or heating system in the old Halmrast Building at all hours of the day or of the night. No one in Kedzie and the sister congregations in Chicago will lose the vision of Borghild Nerhus (Mrs. Leonard Johnson), a beautiful soul and a highly gifted pianist and organist. And there were many, like Einer B. Andersen, later a medical doctor, who even in their teens performed at the organ for the Sunday services of worship.

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There is Trygve Ager's article (*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*, March 30, 1958) lauding the faithfulness of Halvard Folkestad, serving Colfax and Spring Brook, Wisconsin, at the age of 74. The Folkestads, Hans A. Ofsties, Jan B. Skagens, Daniel Heliksons, Ragnvald Dahls, and others now constitute a Florida colony. The city of Neenah, Wisconsin, where once the work was thriving, claims two elderly people, the Peter J. Bylows. At 85 and 81 they celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary in 1959. Carl J. Foss, who came from Trondheim and joined our church in Virginia, Minnesota, in 1903, achieved the office of construction engineer for the United States government in Alaska. He and his wife were for many years the mainstay of the Methodist Church in Ketchikan. They now live in Palo Alto, California. Son Harold is a prominent architect there and Clarence is a building engineer in Seattle and Anchorage.

A number of the second and third generation have made conspicuous progress in the field of higher education. Albert C. Knudson, Arthur S. Williamson, and Howard A. Slaatte have been mentioned. Gertrude Jacobsen, Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Minnesota and a Ph.D. in English from Harvard University, taught in the department of English at Hunter College. Walter Hendricks, also Phi Beta Kappa, from Amherst College, and later a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, is a specialist in English medieval and Renaissance literature. He was for six years (1940-46) chairman of the department of Humanities in the Illinois Institute of Technology, then became president successively of Marlboro College (1946-51) and Windham College (1951- ), the latter institution founded by himself and located in Putney, Vermont. Walter enjoys the friendship of the poet Robert Frost, his former teacher at Amherst, as well as that of the columnist Dorothy Thompson and the poetess Emily Dickinson. He is also interested in publication from the commercial point of view, being president of Hendricks House and vice-president and general editor of Hendricks-Farrar-Straus. Engaging and enthusiastic in what he undertakes, Walter is perhaps better known in the Norwegian-Danish constituency as brother of William R. Henrik-

sen, formerly of Chicago Asbury, a strong churchman and real estate man. After transferring from Asbury to the American Austin Methodist Church he assumed responsibilities as Sunday school superintendent for six years (after 15 years in that office in Asbury) and as chairman of the board of trustees.

LeRoy Anderson, formerly of the church in Superior, Wisconsin, is now professor of electrical engineering in the University of Minnesota. A brother and sister have likewise made their marks. John is an assistant superintendent in the Boston division of the Minneapolis Honeywell Company. Evelyn (Mrs. Ferguson) is a county welfare employee who earned her M.A. at the University of Colorado, her thesis being entitled "History of the Norwegian-Danish Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States."

Robert Lystad, son of Arthur Lystad, prominent layman of Milwaukee's Grace Church, specialized in anthropology at Northwestern University. In 1947 he and his wife, the former Anita Firing, spent a year in Ghana. Out of this study came a groundbreaking work entitled *The Ashanti—A Proud People* (Rutgers University Press, 1958). Lystad coached Peace Corps students, with Ghana as their destination, in the summer of 1961. He is presently associate professor of African Affairs in the School of Advanced International Studies, a graduate division of Johns Hopkins University. Raymond E. Esthus, a grandson of C. A. Andersen, with a doctorate from Duke University, teaches American diplomatic history in Newcomb College, Tulane University.

In the field of medicine several men come to mind, because of their distinctive achievements. Cushman D. Haagenen, grandson of Andrew Haagenen, was named earlier. Dr. Haagenen is known internationally as an authority on cancer. He serves as professor in the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Columbia University. He is also director of surgery at Francis Delafield Hospital.

Coming also from the Norwegian Methodist background are Harald M. Graning, Robert Hewitt, and Thorvald J. Jensen.

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Harald Graning is the son of Martin K. Graning, a staunch layman of Minneapolis Asbury. Dr. Graning is now addressed as regional director of the United States Public Health Service for regions 1 and 2, covering the New England states and New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. One thinks of Harald as a person of rare diligence and thoroughness not only in medicine but in the area of Christian relations. We are advised that Dr. Robert Hewitt, whose home was in Hillsboro, North Dakota, retired in 1961 from the United States Public Health Service and lives in Colorado. Dr. Thorvald Jensen, still a loyal member of Wesley Church, Duluth, is the son of a pioneer preacher, Cornelius Jensen.

One who traces his boyhood to Stoughton, Wisconsin, and his first steps in religion to the church there, has since risen to the office of the presidency of the Western Electric Company. He is Haakon I. Romnes, son of the layman Hans Romnes and nephew of the late pastor, Sigbjørn Fosdal. From the University of Wisconsin he received the honorary degree of doctor of laws (LL.D.) in 1960. We take the liberty of quoting him in part from a recent letter: "I was most fortunate to grow up in the environment created by the many solid people of Stoughton. In this environment the Norwegian-Danish Methodist Church played no small part." Not less outstanding, though in a different field, is Haakon's brother Arne, once organist in the Stoughton church. Arne serves as professor in the School of Dentistry of Northwestern University.

Other fields are represented by the sons and daughters of the former church. George Erickson, who grew to manhood in the Brighton, Minnesota, congregation, holds the office of district judge and finds time to serve as local preacher in the Methodist church of New Ulm, Minnesota. James O. Folkestad, son of Rev. Halvard Folkestad, supervises the Nebraska National Forest and Oglala National Grasslands for the Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture. A graduate of the School of Forestry of the University of Minnesota, his office is now located in Lincoln, Nebraska. Vernon W. Anderson, at one time active in Duluth



Wesley, serves as general manager of the San Francisco Municipal Railway.

In the field of music, Olive Fremstad, born in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1871, of a Norwegian father and a Swedish mother and reared in Norway, achieved fame as a mezzo soprano. When she was ten years of age the family came to Grantsburg, Wisconsin, and joined the Norwegian Methodist Church, where Gustav Mathisen and later Knut Winberg became their pastors. Here, as in Norway, she played and sang with her father in revival meetings. E. T. Schollert remembered her from his camp meetings in Brighton, Minn. How deep and lasting an impression her early Methodist environment had made on her is evidenced by her leave-taking speech in the Metropolitan Opera House: "I have lived for but one purpose, to give you my best. . . . May we all meet in that far beyond where there is eternal peace and harmony." From Irving Kalodin, p. 287. *The Story of the Metropolitan Opera*.

Miss Fremstad was a pupil of Lotti Lehman in Germany 1893-95. She was decorated twice by the French Government. Her parents are buried in Grantsburg.

Undoubtedly some of the old churches are in disrepair or have been put to new and perhaps strange uses. It was a noble gesture of kindness and respect by American Methodists when the North Iowa Conference voted to preserve the original Washington Prairie Church, built in 1853 and located eight miles southeast of Decorah. According to a report in the *Des Moines Register* (June 25, 1961), the old sanctuary in which O. P. Petersen served as first pastor is now in the care of the trustees of First Church, Decorah. As a further act of recognition, lending force to the thought that tradition is not intended for moss-gathering but for momentum, the Iowa delegation to the World Conference of Methodism in Oslo, Norway, in 1961 took with them an oil lamp, unused for half a century, from the historic Washington Prairie Church and presented it to the Methodists of Norway. So a tangible evidence of O. P. Petersen's pioneering in the realm of the spirit was carried with reverence to the homeland that since 1856 has known him as the founder of Methodism within its borders.

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Chosen with some hesitation, and we trust with some reverence, is a phrase from the Sermon on the Mount as our book title. The uses of salt are many, and the commodity is precious. In ancient China it ranked only second to gold. The Romans used it as money; hence, our word "salary" and our expression "worth one's salt." Salt is a symbol for preservation, for incorruptibility. It is said that in medieval Russia a little salt was sprinkled on the coffins of the dead to insure eternal life. And salt is a symbol for blood, which may account for its use in certain ancient rituals. Whether Jesus had all of these things in mind we do not know, but he knew that a pinch of salt on a poor man's fare made the simplest meal more palatable and more complete.

It is not given to anyone to know personally all of the people who are cited in this presentation. It can surely be said, however, that the leading participants and multitudes of followers in the drama of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America represent, as do all Christians, the life-preserving and life-enriching values. Whether living or dead, their spirit and their works live after them. They were and are the salt of the earth.

To bring to a close this portion of immigrant and religious history with a personal word, my parents were attracted to Methodism in a revival in 1885 in Drammen, Norway, when they were single and seventeen. Upon arriving in this country in 1895, father decided upon the ministry. Both blessed and burdened with a large family, he and mother toiled in smaller congregations, several of them in Wisconsin. At length he received more remunerative appointments. A number of the persons mentioned herein are distinct personalities with whom we became acquainted as they called at our home and as they preached in our churches in the Middle West.

If the foregoing chapters are devoid of the throb of life and lacking in inspiration, the fault is ours. The people of whom we speak experienced weal and woe in their daily affairs and in their corporate religious activities. To re-create the warm and intimate fellowship shared by this company of immigrant Methodists is not easy. Like converts everywhere, they possessed an enthusiasm and

a sense of mission that defy verbal description. Through their hymns, many of them adopted from Lutheranism, something of their spirit may be caught. From the open windows on a Sunday morning the casual passerby might hear the stately "Kirken den er et gammelt hus" (Built on a Rock the Church doth stand, says a familiar American translation) or the stimulating "Stem i en sang, Guds Israel" (Join in a song, God's Israel). The Sunday evening services and the week night class meetings found the worshipers joining heartily in "Kan du synge den nye sangen?" (Can you sing the new song?) or "Hvor deilig det er at møtes naar ene man vandrer frem" (How lovely it is to meet as one journeys on alone). On Sundays when the district superintendent made his quarterly visits they gathered at the altar rail for holy communion to the strains of "Jeg er idag min Jesu gjest" (I am today the guest of my Jesus).

Baptisms, confirmations, and funerals had their special hymns. Christmas tree festivals (*Juletraefester*) brought forth the joyous "Jeg er saa glad hver Julekveld" (I am so happy every Christmas night) and many others. Easter Sunday provided the one good opportunity during the year for "Paaskemorgen slukker sorgen" (Easter morning dispels the sorrow). Spirits were lifted when, at various times the pastor took the lead in the graveside singing of "O taenk naar engang samles skal de frelstes menighed" (O think when the congregation of the saved shall one time gather), while friends shed real tears and prepared to shake hands in sympathy with the bereaved. It was not uncommon on the following Sunday for the pastor to announce the singing of "Helgen her og helgen hisset er vi i Guds menighed" (Saints here and saints beyond are we in God's congregation) or perhaps "Taenk naar engang den taage er forsvunden" (O think when one day the fog shall be lifted).

Almost without fail on special occasions like rallies, anniversaries, and the closing service of the annual conference session would be sung, with all organ stops open, "Den himmelske lov-sang" (The heavenly anthem). At present the fellowship dinner held in Evanston or Chicago annually in the month of May, and

the summer camp at Lake Ripley, Wisconsin, provide probably the best opportunities for keeping alive that hymn on this side of the Atlantic. Many have contributed toward perpetuating the fellowship dinner. Merrill Egeland has established himself as the master of ceremonies. For the summer camp near Cambridge Johanna (Jo) Johnson of old Bethel, Chicago, has served perennially as registrar, while the deanship and managerial duties have fallen upon the shoulders of the late Russell Olson (Racine Bethany), Nels (Nip) Johnson (Racine Trinity), Howard Joransen (Chicago Bethel), and others. With the passage of years, newer and younger voices stumble over the words of "Den himmelske lovsang" while older members gradually take their places in the heavenly choir, in the glorious land of "Den store hvite flok" (The great white host).

Time was when in class meetings (klasssemøter), in smaller and more intimate groups, men and women sang songs unfamiliar to their descendants, but expressing the same hope of an eternal reward as in "Den himmelske lovsang:"

Snart er vi hjemme og staar for Thronen,  
Hvad gjør det da, om Solen har os braendt.  
Naar Hytten falder, saa faar vi Kronen,  
Og dermed er jo alt Elende endt.

What matters the scorching of the sun, or the collapse of this earthly house? We shall stand before the throne and receive the crown of life. Sorrow and sighing will then have fled.

This survey of the religious quest of an immigrant people has brought to light the first encounters with American Methodists in upper New York State, in the Fox River valley of Illinois, and in seamen's missions along the eastern seaboard, notably in the Bethel Ship John Wesley in New York harbor. From the establishment of separate Norwegian-Danish congregations came the formation of a mission conference and, in 1880, the creation of a complete annual conference centered in the upper Middle West—in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota.

Parallel with the growth of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, and much dependent upon its vital forces, came extension into



the Far West and into the East. The struggle for tough immigrant souls in Mormon Utah proved almost futile. Reflected in the official weekly publication, *Den Kristelige Talsmand*, were the thought and the life of the Scandinavians of Methodist persuasion. But the *Talsmand* and its successor, *Evangelisk Tidende*, dealt also to a considerable extent with mundane as well as sacred affairs, portraying through letters, editorials, and reports the everyday activities and problems of the constituency.

Like any living organism, the conference reached its maturity. Its members next were subjected to the abnormal strains of a world war, doubly trying for so-called hyphenates. Forces of disintegration were at work in the 1920's. Immigration practically ceased. Children and grandchildren, if they yet attended the church of their fathers and mothers, were not as sure that God spoke and understood Norwegian. And bilingual pastors, becoming more skilled in the English language and more accustomed to American ways, yearned for the greener pastures which American Methodism seemed to offer.

Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America had nevertheless fulfilled an indispensable and sacred mission of winning souls that were spiritually at sea, of preserving the faith of those who were committed, and of preparing its members and sometimes entire congregations for creative participation in the broader activities of American Methodism and of the church universal.

When nearly two thousand years ago the Son of God appeared in earthly flesh there may have been little excitement in Bethlehem, save in the stable and among the holy family. But the Scriptures relate that there were wise men in the East who anticipated the great event. With keener insight than others, they saw the star of earth-shaking portent hovering over the place where the Christ child lay, and they obeyed the divine impulse to follow and to find. There are lessons to be learned from the ancient Magi. Neither distance nor the hardships of travel in that desert country turned them from their high purpose. They came to worship and to offer rich gifts, expecting no reward. Perceiving in the infant Jesus "the hopes and fears of all the years," they recognized tremendous

possibilities for good in a small beginning. And, knowing that Herod's request for a personal report of their historic visit boded no good, they returned to their own country by another way. It is this other way, by-passing Herod and the sordid things for which he stood, that our forebears found, to their eternal glory and to ever-recurring blessing for their posterity in the new world.

## A COMMENTARY ON SOURCES

THE desire for the publication of a history of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America is of long standing. From the earliest years the Norwegian-Danish Conference gave consideration to the matter of compilation and formulation. According to the first conference year book (*Protokol over Forhandlingerne i den Nordvestlige Norske Aarskonference af den Methodist Episcopale Kirke*, 1880, p. 27) a committee of three was elected to write the story of missionary work both in America and in Norway and Denmark. The members were O. P. Petersen, Andrew Haagensen, and Martin Hansen. The following year Hansen alone was authorized to proceed with the task.

Plans for a systematic collection of historical materials were made in 1885 with the election of a new committee, including some members of the original committee (*Year Book*, 1885, p. 11). A. O. Ulland replaced Hansen on the committee. There is no record of Hansen's having made progress in the earlier assignment. In 1888 the conference adopted a resolution proposing the organization of a historical society (*Year Book*, 1888, p. 17). Officers of the society would report annually to the conference. All pastors were eligible to membership but were not required to join. The fruits of this effort came to light in printed form with Andrew Haagensen's *Den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Historie paa Begge Sider Havet* (The History of Norwegian-Danish Methodism on Both Sides of the Ocean), published in Chicago in 1894 by the office of the Norwegian-Danish Book Store. Haagensen's rather comprehensive work of 326 pages related the experiences of the pioneers in America, the organization and first years of the annual conference, and missionary activities in Utah, on the Pacific Coast, in the East, and in Norway and Denmark. His personal recollections and the reports of the Norwegian Mission and of the Norwegian-Danish Conference provided the backbone for his invaluable book. There is evidence that, in addition to the historical contribution, Haagensen prepared a manuscript on his life in

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America and his association with Methodism but no trace of it is to be found. No full-scale history of Norwegian-Danish Methodism appeared after Haagenzen's.

Hans P. Bergh's 50th anniversary publication of 88 pages (*Femtiarsskrift udgivet i Anledning af den Norsk-Danske Methodismes Femtiarsjubilaem*, Den Norsk-Danske Boghandel, Chicago, 1901) was not intended to supersede Haagenzen's history. As one member of a committee of five elected in 1900 (*Year Book*, 1900, p. 18), Bergh was urged by his colleagues to proceed with the writing of a *Festskrift* commemorating the organization of the congregation in Cambridge, Wisconsin, the first in Norwegian-Danish Methodism, in 1851. Then serving as manager of the conference bookstore, Bergh decided to present a brief survey, largely statistical, of each congregation.

Attempts were made subsequently to gather documentary material in a single place, as for example in 1903 when a three-man committee on archives (M. L. Kjelstad, J. C. Tollefsen, and Andrew Haagenzen) recommended as a depository the Norwegian-Danish Theological School in Evanston, Illinois (*Year Book*, 1903, p. 25). It was further suggested that the professor in charge of the seminary be made responsible for the safekeeping of historical items and that the presiding elders (later district superintendents) be asked to assist in collecting materials.

By 1911 Carl Frederick Eltzholtz was requesting preachers and layfolk to send data directly to him, explaining that the annual conference had selected him to write a new history, including the work on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. "This work is not accomplished by a turn of the hand," said Eltzholtz in the conference weekly, *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (February 2, 1911). He announced that he had in his possession valuable Christian B. Willerup and O. P. Petersen papers, provided by Mrs. Willerup and by Charles H. Johnson, son-in-law of Petersen. Eltzholtz did not complete his task. In 1915 he offered the conference his source materials, turning them over to a committee of six pastors (Hans K. Madsen, Rasmus F. Wilhelmsen, James A. Sanaker, Jens P. Andersen, O. L. Hansen, and P. M. Peterson). It seems that in the



course of time these papers were loaned to an interested party and were accidentally destroyed in a house fire. To the credit of Eltzholtz it should be said that in 1903 he had authored a careful biography of and commentary on the sermons of Petersen, the founder of Methodism among Norwegians and Danes in America and in Norway (*Livsbilleder af Pastor O. P. Petersen, Grundlaegger af den Biskoppelige Methodistkirke i Norge og Medgrundlaegger af den Norsk-Danske Methodisme i Amerika*). This work of 364 pages was published by Charles H. Johnson through the Norwegian-Danish publishers (Den Norsk-Danske Boghandels Trykkeri), located then at 272 Grand Avenue, Chicago.

The untiring interest of John J. Wang, conference historian, led to the adoption of a resolution favoring a centennial observance in 1943 (*Year Book*, 1938, p. 11). The year 1843 marked the beginning of the first Norwegian Methodist organization in America, in the form of a class in the Norwegian Settlement of the Fox River valley in Illinois, within the Rock River Conference. In harmony with Wang's proposal, the conference elected a committee of six for planning a celebration and for studying the advisability of preparing a history for that occasion. In 1940 the conference authorized the centennial committee, then increased to ten members, to reorganize and to seek affiliation with the American Methodist Historical Society. Four pastors and four laymen were named to the organizing board. In a meeting of the society in 1949 John J. Wang was asked to shape the materials pertaining to the pioneer period, prior to 1880, while the present writer was approached concerning the presentation of that portion of the history which covers the period of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, from 1880 to 1943. Plans were changed, however, when Rev. Wang's health failed.

For the Norwegian-Danish Conference, centered in Chicago and the upper Middle West, the sources are fairly complete. The early pre-conference monthly, *Missionaeren* (1870-77) is indispensable for that decade, reflecting pastoral thinking in the Norwegian Mission, largely confined to Chicago and the state of Wisconsin. Year books containing reports and minutes of the

annual sessions are available for the entire period of the conference. Bound and preserved by the respective conference secretaries, they are now deposited in the library of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois. In the same depository are the bound volumes of *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (1877-1922) and *Evangelisk Tidende* (1922-40), with some omissions. Apparently non-existent are the *Talsmands* of 1886-88, 1892-97, 1899, and 1901-03. These fugitive volumes represent gaps which happily are filled partially by the year books. Also, some clippings are from the missing volumes.

At the near end of the journalistic spectrum are *The Gospel Advocate* (1940-43) and *The Fellowship News Bulletin* (since 1943). For *The Gospel Advocate* only the last two semi-monthly issues came to our attention. Øistein C. Kahrs, Chicago Bethany pastor and editor, maintains a file of the *Bulletin*. A lesser known publication was *Studenten*, issued monthly by the seminary students of Evanston from 1892 to 1894. Lars Marum of Brooklyn, New York, kindly provided his copies.

For the sake of simplicity and uniformity, citations from the conference year books are referred to in the foregoing chapters as "minutes." During the 64 years the titles varied, and there were other changes. From *Protokol over Forhandlingerne i Den Nordvestlige Norske Aarskonference* (1880) the heading shifted to *Protokol over Forhandlingerne ved Den Norske og Danske Aarskonference* (1885), representing not only inclusion of the Danes but a change in the name of the conference. In 1890 "Norske og Danske" was first hyphenated to "Norsk-Danske," the form employed in this history.

The year 1905 marks a change from Teutonic (Germanic) to Roman style type in the year books, although in 1908 the title reverted to Teutonic and remained so until 1920. "Aarbogen" (the year book) first made its appearance in 1916, bringing to an end the cumbersome "Protokol over Forhandlingerne," although the latter made a momentary appearance in 1920. In 1928 the title began with "Year Book," and in 1938 with "Journal and Year Book."

Places of publication of the year book were as follows:

1880-81	Chicago, the <i>Talsmand</i> office
1882-1904	Chicago, the Book Store printing press (Den Norsk-Danske Boghandels Trykkeri)
1905-07	Racine, Wisconsin, Journal Printing Company
1908	Chicago, Gus. G. Martin, Printer
1909-10	Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House
1911	Minneapolis, Standard Press
1912-16	Minneapolis (no printer named)
1917-23	Chicago (no printer named) ; by the secretary, 1920-23
1924-28	Chicago, Gunnar Bloom and the Methodist Book Concern
1929	Forest City, Iowa, Republican Printing Company
1930-43	Chicago (presumably, but not mentioned)

The earlier conference secretaries' names do not appear on the title pages, but the following carried the main responsibility for compiling and organizing and editing after 1930: Ole Røhrstaff (1930-35), Morris Egeland (1936-40), and Edward Evensen (1941-43).

The final issue of the *Journal and Year Book* (1943) contains a historical section with contributions of various kinds. Especially useful for the study of the Middle West are the following articles: T. O. Firing, "The Norwegian-Danish Theological Seminary," H. C. Munson, "The Norwegian-Danish Publishing Society," C. W. Schevenius, "Conference Hymnals and Song Books," Mrs. A. W. Hansen, "Historical Sketch of Elim Old People's Home," and, by an unnamed writer, "History of the Deaconess and Woman's Home." Another informative and stimulating article by Schevenius is "Norwegian-Danish Methodism in Minnesota," included in *Our Fathers Built: A Century of Minnesota Methodism*, edited by Charles Nelson Pace (St. Paul, Minnesota, 1952).

Minutes (*Forhandlingsprotokol*) of the Chicago District Preachers' meetings, from 1891 to 1939, supply useful information gleaned from the papers that were read on theological and practical themes. The first of these annual meetings was held in Milwaukee, Frederick Ring serving as secretary. Edward Evensen functioned in the same capacity at the last meeting, in Evanston in 1939. By previous understanding, no meetings were held in

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1894, 1901, and 1933. None is recorded for 1907 or 1908. Similar reports are available in longhand for the short-lived Omaha District, from 1891 to 1899. No meeting is reported for 1894.

Year books of American conferences furnish certain necessary information. Among those used are the minutes of the Wisconsin Conference (scattered numbers from 1854 to 1876), the West Wisconsin Conference (1858 to 1869), the Minnesota Conference (1869 to 1879), and the Rock River Conference (1843 to 1873). Extensive use was also made of *The Missionary Advocate*, published monthly from 1845 to 1876 in New York by the Board of Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church; of special interest is Olof G. Hedstrøm's "First Quarterly Report" (August, 1846). Likewise pertinent to the pioneer period are the *Annual Reports of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, published from New York from 1820 on. There are some eight references, extending from 1847 to 1883. Of like substance is John M. Reid's two-volume *Missions and Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1879), of which pages 429-435 and 442-450 of the first volume are germane to this study.

To continue the list of sources for the history of the Norwegian-Danish Conference, acknowledgment should be made of anniversary publications for institutions and congregations. Among them are those of the Deaconess and Woman's Home ("Silver Anniversary," 1935) and Lake Ripley Epworth League Institute ("These Twenty-Five Years, 1916 to 1940"). Of the same order are the centennial booklet of the Willerup Methodist Church of Cambridge, Wisconsin (1951), the 60th anniversary of Chicago Bethany (1958), the 50th of Chicago Asbury (1936) and of Chicago Kedzie (1942), and the 45th of Chicago Emmaus (1940).

Furnishing essential background information are many general works as well as monographs. Beginning with Henry J. Cadbury's "First Norwegian Contact with Quakerism" (*Harvard Theological Review*, Cambridge, Massachusetts; volume 34, 1941, pp. 14 ff.) one moves on to Richard Canuteson's "A Little More Light on the Kendall Colony" (*Norwegian-American Studies and Records*, Northfield, Minnesota; volume 18, 1954, pp. 82-101) and



Carlton C. Qualey's "The Fox River Norwegian Settlement" (*Journal of the Illinois Historical Society*, Springfield, Illinois; volume 27, 1934, pp. 133-177).

Rasmus B. Anderson's *The First Chapter of Norwegian Immigration, 1821-1840; Its Causes and Results* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1895) and his *Life Story* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1915) cross the path of Norwegian Methodism at some points, particularly Cambridge, Wisconsin. Standing almost unchallenged in his field is Theodore C. Blegen (*Norwegian Migration to America, 1825-1860*; Northfield, Minnesota, 1931, and *Norwegian Migration to America: the American Transition*; Northfield, 1940). Blegen's groundbreaking work is supplemented by younger scholars, among them Carlton C. Qualey (*Norwegian Settlement in the United States*; Northfield, 1938). Qualey's chapter on "The Sloopers Go West" is most pertinent.

For the Danish side of the story of Scandinavian immigrants little is to be found. Peter S. Vig's out-dated two-volume *Danske i Amerika* (Minneapolis, 1908) gives scant attention to Danish Methodists. In an earlier edition, a preliminary shorter book of 109 pages (Danish Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebraska, 1900), four pages are devoted to Methodists, and not with accuracy. Vig speaks of Christian B. Willerup, co-founder of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in America with O. P. Petersen, as having been converted in the Bethel Ship of New York harbor. The truth is that Willerup associated with American Methodists and was converted among them in Savannah, Georgia, around 1838, seven years before the establishment of the Bethel Ship mission.

Superior in its field is the recent study of Einar Haugen on *The Norwegian Language in America* (University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1953, 2 volumes). Chapter 10 of the first volume on "The Struggle over Norwegian" points up a problem common to all immigrants. More personal is Christopher O. Brohaug and J. Eisteinsen, *Elling Eielsens Liv og Virksomhed* (Chicago, 1883), depicting "the life and work" of a pioneer Lutheran preacher in Wisconsin. Comparable to it in a modest way, and perhaps less trustworthy in details, is such a work as Frederick

Ring, *Reiser og Oplevelser* (Chicago, 1934), the "travels and experiences" of a Midwestern Norwegian Methodist pastor of the 1880's and thereafter.

More compendious are Knut A. Rene, *Historie om Udvandringen fra Voss og Vossingerne i Amerika* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1930) and Martin Ulvestad, *Nordmaendene i Amerika, Deres Historie og Rekord* (Minneapolis, 1907, 2 volumes). Ulvestad sketches, among many others, the life of Nelson Johnson, pioneer Methodist in Wisconsin and Iowa. Johnson's son Martin, who rose to the office of United States Senator from North Dakota, is portrayed in "Memorial Addresses" delivered in the Senate and the House of Representatives after his death (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1910) but more intimately by a daughter, Nellie Johnson Hydle, in a letter to the writer. Still another source, less biographical and more topical, is *Norsk-Amerikanernes Festskrift* (Decorah, Iowa, 1914), edited by Johannes B. Wist.

Old but still valuable treatments of beginnings of Methodism in the Middle West are P. S. Bennett and James Lawson, *History of Methodism in Wisconsin* (Cincinnati, Ohio, 1890) and Chauncey Hobart, *History of Methodism in Minnesota* (Red Wing, Minnesota, 1887). Occasionally a local or county history supplies needed data, as in the case of W. E. Alexander, *History of Winneshiek and Allamakee Counties* (Sioux City, Iowa, 1882).

No extended works on the West or the East have appeared, but most of the year books are available, as well as articles in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* (The Christian Advocate). In 1917 the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference elected a committee (C. J. Larsen, O. O. Twede, C. August Peterson, Martinus Nelson, and N. L. Hansen) to assemble material for their history (*Year Book*, 1917, p. 10). In 1944, several years after the merger of the Western Conference, a previously chosen committee published under the editorship of Martin T. Larson a 42-page *Memorial Journal of Western Norwegian-Danish Methodism* (Portland, Oregon).

As explained in the chapter on "The Church Crosses the Rockies," the official periodical of Western Norwegian-Danish Methodism was *Vidnesbyrdet* (The Testimony), published week-

ly (at first semi-monthly) from 1889 to 1922, when a merger with *Evangelisk Tidende* and *Østens Missionær* was effected. Continuing the function of *Vidnesbyrdet* but not recognized as an official journal was *Sambaandet*, edited by Frederick Engebretsen. No file of either *Vidnesbyrdet* or *Sambaandet* is known to exist, though a bound volume of *Vidnesbyrdet* for the year 1890 has come to light.

Year books of the Western Norwegian-Danish Conference are extant, with the exception of the years 1895, 1898-1901, and 1904-06. Here too the titles differ from time to time. In 1896 it was *Forhandlings-Protokol for den Vestlige Norsk-Danske Aarskonference af den Biskoppelige Methodistkirke*. There was no significant change until 1920, when *Journal and Year Book* appeared, with both title and contents printed in English. In the final issues (1937 and 1938) the caption was reduced simply to *Journal*.

Publication of the Western year books began in Portland, Oregon, in 1896, in the printing establishment of *Vidnesbyrdet*, which by 1907 had moved to Seattle. By 1911 the printers had gone on to Ballard, Washington, but continued to publish the annuals. In 1920 and thereafter no further mention is made of the printer; rather, the name of the conference secretary is usually given as the publisher. Included in the list of secretaries are the following pastors:

Abraham Vereide .....	1925
Joachim G. Bringdale .....	1926
H. P. Nelsen .....	1927-28
H. Ernst Andersen .....	1929-32
Frederick Engebretsen .....	1933
Martin T. Larson .....	1934
H. Ernst Andersen .....	1935-38

Miscellaneous sources for the study of Western Conference activities include also H. P. Nelsen's brief historical survey in the *Journal and Year Book of the Norwegian-Danish Conference* (1943); the Montana District minutes for 1895 and 1896; and, the 50th anniversary booklets of San Francisco's Central Church (1945) and Bethany Church, Los Angeles (1946). Mrs. Everett

O. (Mildred) Paup of Seattle loaned to us the original longhand reports from the Montana District preachers' meetings, for which her father, the late P. N. Melby, served as secretary. A comprehensive study of Norwegians on the Pacific Coast is Kenneth Bjork's *West of the Great Divide* (Northfield, Minnesota, 1958). Dr. Bjork is presently the managing editor for the publications of the Norwegian-American Historical Association.

The growth of the mission in the East can be traced through *Østens Missionær* (1911-21), year books of the Eastern Mission (1919-21 and 1924-28), articles and reports in *Den Kristelige Talsmand* and *Evangelisk Tidende*, and in anniversary booklets. Through the kindness and foresight of Lars Marum a dozen or more copies of *Østens Missionær* (from 1918, 1919, and 1921) were open to us.

Among the more helpful *Talsmand* articles pertaining to the East are P. B. Smith's "Erindringer" (Recollections) and Albert M. Hansen's "Lidt fra Østen" (A Little from the East), both in 1915. In *Evangelisk Tidende* appeared Andrew Hansen's "Survey of the Work of the Methodist Episcopal Church among the Norwegian-Danish People of the Eastern States of America" (1922) and Albert Hansen's "Our Future Work in America" (1923). In 1940 Andrew Hansen's "50 Aar som Metodist Praedikant" (50 Years as a Methodist Preacher) may have been a small part of a projected history of Norwegian-Danish Methodism in the East. According to his daughter, Mrs. S. (Mabel) Cooper of Brooklyn, her father had long been collecting material for such a work. His last effort in that direction took the form of "Norwegian and Danish Methodism in the Eastern States" in the *Journal and Year Book* (1943).

While O. P. Petersen's section of the "Tenth Annual Report of the Brooklyn Church Society" (1889) is important for Bethel Ship details, the 50th anniversary publication is more extensive (Brooklyn, 1924). The cover title reads: *Jubilaums Aarbog for Metodistkirkens Norsk-Danske Virksomhet i de Østlige Stater*; but the official flyleaf wording is: *Jubilaums Aarbog: Aarbogen for den Norsk-Danske Mission og den Norsk-Danske Epworth Liga*



*Konvention*. More localized are the 40th anniversary *Festskrift* of the Perth Amboy, New Jersey, congregation (1914), made available through Jacob Struve, a layman, and "These Seventy Years" (Perth Amboy, 1944) for the same Wesley Church. The second of these booklets was generously provided by John Christoffersen, another layman, through the mediation of Mrs. Edward Kohler, the former Martha Peterson, of Spotswood, New Jersey. Of considerable value because of the importance of young people's work in the East are the historical references in "Silver Jubilee Convention of the Norwegian-Danish District Epworth League of the Eastern States" (Brooklyn, 1929).

Materials pertaining to Methodism in Norway belong less directly but nevertheless appropriately to this study. Religious movements of the nineteenth century are covered in Andreas Seierstad's *Kyrkjelegt Reformarbeid i Norig i Nittande Hundreaaret* (Reform work of the Church in Norway in the Nineteenth Century) (Bergen, Norway, 1923) and in an English translation of Einar Molland's *Church Life in Norway, 1800-1950* (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1957). Giving a fairly broad dissenter background is Nils Bloch-Hoell's *Pinsebevegelsen* (The Pentecostal Movement) (Oslo, 1956), the presentation of a denominational body in Norway which was organized by a Methodist pastor, Thomas Barratt. Johan Thorkildsen's *Den Norske Metodistkirkes Historie* (Oslo, 1926) is the only work of its kind and now in need of being brought up to date. Recent books in this field are *Metodistkirken i Norge; 100 Aar, 1856-1956*, edited by Eilert Bernhardt and Aage Hardy (Oslo, 1956) and Aage Hardy's *O. P. Petersen: Metodist Kirkens Grunnlegger i Norge* (Oslo, 1953). The first is a centennial collection of topical and institutional contributions by several Norwegian pastors, while the second is a condensation and revision of Eltzholtz's *Livsbilleder af Pastor O. P. Petersen*, originally published in 1903. More recently Bishop Odd Hagen of the Northern European Area has written *Preludes to Methodism in Northern Europe* (Oslo, 1961), an earnest and concise endeavor to complete the story of beginnings in Scandinavia.

Paralleling Norwegian-Danish Methodism, and at times intersecting it, is the Methodist mission to Swedish immigrants. The standard Swedish account has been N. M. Liljegren's *Svenska Metodismen i Amerika* (Chicago, 1895). Excellent autobiographies of important pioneer pastors are S. B. Newman's *Sjelfbiografi* (Chicago, 1890) and Victor Witting's *Minnen Fran Mitt Lif* (Worcester, Massachusetts, 1904). In our study the centennial anniversary booklet of the Immanuel Swedish Methodist Church of Brooklyn, New York (Brooklyn, 1945) provides a Swedish perspective on questions related to the Bethel Ship. An older work dealing mainly with Swedish Lutheranism in America is Eric Norelius' *De Svenska Luterska Forsamlingarnas och Svenskarnas Historia i Amerika* (History of the Swedish Lutheran Congregations and of the Swedes in America) (Rock Island, Illinois, 1890).

While the sources cited in this commentary do not exhaust all possibilities, nor do they include more than half of the items mentioned in footnotes, they do cover the main areas as well as some of the lesser known portions of the field. Some items were loaned to the writer and returned to their owners. Others have been deposited with the librarian of Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois.

# APPENDIX

## Memorial Journal of Western Norwegian-Danish Methodism Sessions of the Conference

The work was organized as a Mission Conference in 1888 in Moscow, Idaho, and as an Annual Conference in Astoria, Oregon, in 1895.

Year	Place	Bishop	Secretary
1888	Moscow, Idaho	W. X. Ninde	J. L. Ericksen
1889	Portland, Ore.	Thos. Bowman	J. L. Ericksen
1890	Tacoma, Wash.	J. P. Newman	J. L. Ericksen
1891	Seattle, Wash.	J. N. Fitzgerald	J. L. Ericksen
1892	Portland, Ore.	J. M. Walden	E. M. Stangeland
1893	Moscow, Idaho	D. A. Goodsell	E. M. Stangeland
1894	Oakland, Calif.	J. N. Fitzgerald	F. Hermans
1895	Astoria, Ore.	Thos. Bowman	F. Hermans
1896	Tacoma, Wash.	Earl Cranston	Joseph Olsen
1897	Portland, Ore.	C. C. McCabe	Joseph Olsen
1898	Tacoma, Wash.	C. C. McCabe	Joseph Olsen
1899	Spokane, Wash.	John H. Vincent	Joseph Olsen
1900	Portland, Ore.	E. G. Andrews	Joseph Olsen
1901	Seattle, Wash.	W. F. Mallalieu	Joseph Olsen
1902	Astoria, Ore.	Earl Cranston	Joseph Olsen
1903	Tacoma, Wash.	J. W. Hamilton	F. A. Scarvie
1904	Ballard, Wash.	W. F. McDowell	F. A. Scarvie
1905	Portland, Ore.	H. Spellmeyer	Joseph Olsen
1906	Everett, Wash.	H. W. Warren	Joseph Olsen
1907	Seattle, Wash.	David H. Moore	Joseph Olsen
1908	Spokane, Wash.	Edwin H. Hughes	Joseph Olsen
1909	Ballard, Wash.	Chas. W. Smith	F. A. Scarvie
1910	Tacoma, Wash.	Chas. W. Smith	F. A. Scarvie
1911	Oakland, Calif.	Edwin H. Hughes	F. A. Scarvie
1912	Portland (Vanc.)	R. J. Cooke	F. A. Scarvie
1913	Astoria, Wash.	R. J. Cooke	F. A. Scarvie
1914	Seattle, Wash.	R. J. Cooke	F. A. Scarvie
1915	San Francisco, Calif.	Edwin H. Hughes	F. A. Scarvie
1916	Tacoma, Wash.	Mat. S. Hughes	F. A. Scarvie
1917	Everett, Wash.	Mat. S. Hughes	F. A. Scarvie
1918	Bellingham, Wash.	W. O. Shepard (C. J. Larsen)	F. A. Scarvie
1919	Seattle (First)	Mat. S. Hughes	Abraham Vereide
1920	Portland (First)	W. O. Shepard	Abraham Vereide
1921	Seattle (Emanuel)	W. O. Shepard	Abraham Vereide
1922	Portland (Vanc.)	Chas. W. Burns	H. P. Nelsen
1923	Los Angeles, Calif.	Adna W. Leonard	H. P. Nelsen
1924	San Francisco, Calif.	Eben S. Johnson	Abraham Vereide
1925	Aberdeen, Wash.	W. O. Shepard	Abraham Vereide
1926	Everett, Wash.	Chas. W. Burns	J. G. Bringdale
1927	Oakland, Calif.	T. B. Nicholson	H. P. Nelsen

## THE SALT OF THE EARTH

Year	Place	Bishop	Secretary
1928	Tacoma, Wash.	Chas. W. Burns	H. P. Nelsen
1929	Seattle (Emanuel)	Titus Lowe	H. E. Andersen
1930	Bellingham, Wash.	W. E. Brown	H. E. Andersen
1931	San Francisco, Calif.	Fredrick Leete	H. E. Andersen
1932	Portland (Vanc.)	J. Ralph Magee	H. E. Andersen
1933	Eureka, Calif.	James C. Baker	F. Engebretsen
1934	Portland (First)	James C. Baker	Martin T. Larson



From the Journal and Year Book of the  
Norwegian-Danish Conference of The Methodist Church  
1943

**PART VIII. ROLL OF DECEASED MEMBERS**

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith," 2 Tim. 4:7.

Name	Age	Where	When	Place of Burial	Conf. Relation
Otto J. Sanaker	31	Cambridge, Wis.	Dec. 7, 1880	Cambridge, Wis.	E
C. P. Agrelius	83	Deer Park, Wis.	Aug. 9, 1881	Deer Park	R
M. J. Rye	26	Salt Lake City	Oct. 6, 1888	Salt Lake City	E
Carl Schou	48	Aarhus, Den.	Oct. 31, 1888		E
Ole Kristensen	37	Hurum, Utah	Nov. 12, 1890	Salt Lake City	E
Nils Christofferson	67	St. Paul, Minn.	Apr. 4, 1892	St. Paul	S
Ole Helland	78	Freeport, Ill.	Apr. 18, 1892		R
Andrew Peterson	53	Deer Park, Wis.	Oct. 3, 1892	Deer Park	R
Christian Oman	42	Waupaca, Wis.	Nov. 4, 1894	Waupaca, Wis.	R
John H. Johnson	59	Chicago, Ill.	Oct. 8, 1896	Richland, Wis.	R
Halvor H. Holland	79	Leland, Ill.	Apr. 12, 1897	Leland, Ill.	R
Ole P. Peterson	79	Brooklyn, N. Y.	Dec. 10, 1901	Milwaukee	R
Endre Endresen	66	LaCrosse, Wis.	June 17, 1902	Deer Park	R
Olaf A. Wiersen	59	Chicago, Ill.	Mar. 26, 1904	Chicago, Ill.	E
Lewis A. Larson	58	Belvidere, Minn.	Aug. 9, 1908	Belvidere	E
Carl H. Josephsen	43	Cambridge, Wis.	Sept. 4, 1908	Cambridge, Wis.	E
Ole Jacobsen	59	St. Paul, Minn.	Sept. 29, 1908	Minneapolis	E
Engebret Arveson	82	Porsgrund, Nor.	Jan. 4, 1909	Borgestad, Nor.	R
Anders Haagensen	76	Evanston, Ill.	Jan. 4, 1911	Chicago, Ill.	R
Chr. Christofferson	72	Deer Park, Wis.	Sept. 30, 1915	Deer Park	R
Ole H. Wilson	59	Crookston, Minn.	Feb. 26, 1916	St. Paul	E
Michael L. Kjelstad	63	LaCrosse, Wis.	Oct. 19, 1916	Oak Park, Ill.	E
Peder Jensen	86	Duluth, Minn.	Sept. 21, 1917	Forest City, Ia.	R
Oliver L. Hansen	74	Chicago, Ill.	Mar. 11, 1918	Chicago, Ill.	R
Henry Danielsen	74	Fremont, Neb.	Nov. 2, 1920	Cambridge, Wis.	R
Christian Olsen	66	Grand Forks, N. D.	June 7, 1921	Hillsboro, N. D.	R
Cornelius Jensen	66	Detroit Lakes	Dec. 9, 1921	Detroit Lakes	R
James Petersen	80	Tulsa, Okla.	Apr. 22, 1922	Sioux City	R
Arne Johnson	88	Stoughton, Wis.	May 1, 1922	Leland, Ill.	R
Ole T. Lowen	77	Duluth, Minn.	May 12, 1924	Aneta, N. D.	R
Hans P. Bergh	78	Chicago, Ill.	May 20, 1924	Chicago, Ill.	R
Amund Olsen Ulland	93	Detroit Lakes	Dec. 4, 1925	Forest City, Ia.	R
Knud Winberg	63	Warren, Minn.	Dec. 19, 1925	Warren, Minn.	R
Elliott Hansen	79	Grantsburg, Wis.	Jan. 4, 1925	Grantsburg	R
Ramus F. Wilhelmsen	66	Minneapolis, Minn.	Aug. 24, 1927	Forest City, Ia.	R
C. Albert Joransen	44	Chicago, Ill.	Sept. 7, 1927	Humboldt, Ia.	E
Andrew Ericksen	62	Manistee, Mich.	Sept. 22, 1927	Ludington, Mich.	R
Carl F. Eltzholtz	89	Los Angeles, Cal.	Apr. 7, 1929	Cambridge, Wis.	R
Jonas A. Jacobsen	66	Minneapolis, Minn.	May 23, 1929	Minneapolis	R
Carl A. Andersen	62	Chicago, Ill.	Sept. 11, 1930	Oak Park, Ill.	E
Jens P. Andersen	74	Minneapolis, Minn.	Oct. 5, 1933	Minneapolis	R
James Sanaker	81	Minneapolis, Minn.	May 20, 1934	Minneapolis	R
Oscar J. Bagne	61	Minneapolis, Minn.	Mar. 17, 1935	Minneapolis	R
Gustav G. Abrahamson	76	Minneapolis, Minn.	Jan. 5, 1936	Minneapolis	R
Gustav Mathisen	78	Chicago, Ill.	July 3, 1937	Chicago, Ill.	R
E. T. Schollert	85	Minneapolis, Minn.	Feb. 26, 1938	Minneapolis	R
Ole Rohrstaff	52	Sheboygan, Wis.	June 21, 1938	Cambridge, Wis.	R
Nels E. Simonsen	84	Chicago, Ill.	Apr. 18, 1939	Chicago, Ill.	R
Paul J. Haugen	78	Grand Forks, N. D.	May 25, 1939	Grand Forks	R
Asle Knudsen	95	Minneapolis, Minn.	Sept. 29, 1939	Minneapolis	R
Thorvald M. Hauge	83	Minneapolis, Minn.	May 24, 1940	Chicago, Ill.	R
Martinus Hillerud	85	Claresholm, Alb.	June 16, 1940	Claresholm	R
Ole Nielsen	75	Chicago, Ill.	Feb. 24, 1942	Chicago, Ill.	R
Johan C. Tollefsen	90	Oslo, Norway	..... 1943	Norway	R

Conference Relation: E—Effective; R—Retired; S—Supernumerary.

# THE SALT OF THE EARTH

## PART IX. HISTORICAL

### The Sessions of the Conference

No.	Date	Place	Bishop	Secretary
1	September 9, 1880	Racine, Trinity	Harris	Chr. Treider
2	September 1, 1881	Chicago, First	Foss	Martinus Nelson
3	September 28, 1882	St. Paul	Merrill	Martinus Nelson
4	September 19, 1883	Racine, Trinity	Andrews	Chr. Treider
5	September 17, 1884	Forest City	Foster	Chr. Treider
6	September 10, 1885	Cambridge, Wis.	Bowman	L. A. Larson
7	September 16, 1886	Minneapolis, First	Merrill	L. A. Larson
8	September 21, 1887	Chicago, First	Fowler	L. A. Larson
9	September 19, 1888	St. Paul	Hurst	L. A. Larson
10	September 12, 1889	Racine, Trinity	Fitzgerald	L. A. Larson
11	September 11, 1890	LaCrosse, Wis.	Fowler	L. A. Larson
12	September 9, 1891	Chicago, First	Merrill	L. A. Larson
13	September 22, 1892	Duluth, First	Goodsell	L. A. Larson
14	September 21, 1893	Chicago, Maplewood Ave.	Ninde	L. A. Larson
15	September 13, 1894	Minneapolis, First	Foss	L. A. Larson
16	September 4, 1895	Milwaukee, Wis.	Merrill	L. A. Larson
17	September 10, 1896	Hillsboro, N. D.	Warren	L. A. Larson
18	September 8, 1897	Forest City	Vincent	L. A. Larson
19	August 31, 1898	Racine, Trinity	Joyce	L. A. Larson
20	August 31, 1899	Minneapolis, First	Foss	L. A. Larson
21	September 6, 1900	Milwaukee, Wis.	Mallalieu	L. A. Larson
22	September 5, 1901	Chicago, Maplewood Ave.	Fowler	James Sanaker
23	September 4, 1902	Racine, Trinity	Merrill	James Sanaker
24	September 3, 1903	Duluth, First	Goodsell	R. F. Wilhelmsen
25	September 25, 1904	Duluth, First	McDowell	R. F. Wilhelmsen
26	September 7, 1905	Minneapolis, First	Spellmeyer	R. F. Wilhelmsen
27	September 19, 1906	Chicago, Moreland	Berry	R. F. Wilhelmsen
28	August 31, 1907	Forest City	Goodsell	R. F. Wilhelmsen
29	September 17, 1908	St. Paul	Wilson	R. F. Wilhelmsen
30	September 8, 1909	Duluth, First	McIntyre	J. A. Jacobsen
31	September 7, 1910	Chicago, First & Imman.	Nuelsen	J. A. Jacobsen
32	August 30, 1911	Racine, Trinity	Hamilton	J. A. Jacobsen
33	September 12, 1912	Omaha, Nebr.	Hughes, E. H.	J. A. Jacobsen
34	September 18, 1913	Milwaukee, Wis.	Shepard	J. A. Jacobsen
35	September 17, 1914	Minneapolis, First	Quayle	J. M. Beckstrom
36	October 7, 1915	Duluth, First	Berry	J. M. Beckstrom
37	September 20, 1916	Stoughton, Wis.	Henderson	J. M. Beckstrom
38	September 19, 1917	Minneapolis, Bethlehem	Henderson	J. M. Beckstrom
39	September 12, 1918	Chicago, Kedzie Ave.	McDowell	J. M. Beckstrom
40	September 24, 1919	Racine, Trinity	Henderson	J. M. Beckstrom
41	September 29, 1920	Duluth, First	Henderson	Edward Erickson
42	September 28, 1921	Deer Park, Wis.	Henderson	Edward Erickson
43	September 20, 1922	Milwaukee, Wis.	Leete	Ole Rohrstaff
44	September 26, 1923	Chicago, Austin	Henderson	Ole Rohrstaff
45	September 17, 1924	St. Paul	Mead	Ole Rohrstaff
46	October 1, 1925	Superior, Wis.	Hughes	Ole Rohrstaff
47	September 9, 1926	Cambridge, Wis.	Richardson	Ole Rohrstaff
48	September 1, 1927	Racine, Trinity	Hughes	Ole Rohrstaff
49	September 6, 1928	Forest City	Hughes	Ole Rohrstaff
50	September 26, 1929	Minneapolis, First	Leete	Ole Rohrstaff
51	September 18, 1930	Racine, Trinity	Hughes	Ole Rohrstaff
52	September 3, 1931	Chicago, First & Imman	Burns	Ole Rohrstaff
53	August 25, 1932	St. Paul	Waldorf	Ole Rohrstaff
54	August 24, 1933	Chicago, Kedzie Ave.	Waldorf	Ole Rohrstaff
55	September 6, 1934	Milwaukee, Wis.	Brown	Ole Rohrstaff
56	September 5, 1935	Brooklyn, Sunset Park	Hughes	Ole Rohrstaff
57	August 27, 1936	Cambridge, Wis.	Waldorf	E. Morris Egeland
58	September 9, 1937	Chicago, First & Imman	Flint	E. Morris Egeland
59	September 8, 1938	Duluth, Wesley	Waldorf	E. Morris Egeland
60	September 7, 1939	Racine, Trinity	Wade	E. Morris Egeland
61	September 5, 1940	Ludington, Mich.	Wade	E. Morris Egeland
62	September 4, 1941	Chicago, Asbury	Waldorf	Edward Evensen
63	September 9, 1942	Chicago, Kedzie Ave.	Waldorf	Edward Evensen
64	May 27, 1943	Racine, Trinity	Waldorf	Edward Evensen

## STATISTICAL TABLE

Year	Probationers	Members incl. Non-Resident	Churches	Estimated Value	Parsonages	Estimated Value	Preachers (1)	Salary (2)	Church Schools	Scholars in all Departments	Collections for Benev. Purposes
1880	274	2266	43	\$ 66700	16	\$ 15990	24	\$12835	45	848	\$ 1872
1881	310	2321	43	72000	17	16280	24	14199	41	948	2288
1882	310	2357	48	85650	19	29800	33	14472	45	1263	2779
1883	310	2522	49	96500	20	18600	36	12951	42	1758	2636
1884	394	2708	53	95514	22	20200	32	14544	47	2118	3062
1885	406	2977	55	98100	24	25075	36	16465	59	2416	2985
1886	450	3144	63	116525	26	30275	44	17191	65	2586	3458
1887	455	3363	67	123750	27	31275	54	18391	60	2572	4117
1888	337	3404	65	142600	29	32375	42	19853	67	2796	3939
1889	593	3719	69	159300	29	30600	43	19623	80	2870	4742
1890	506	3902	70	165650	30	33550	48	20523	76	2799	4981
1891	479	3923	69	182950	31	33800	42	21866	67	2640	5218
1892	379	4093	75	207500	37	39550	43	23442	72	2664	5640
1893	452	4173	73	208700	36	46000	47	23806	76	2849	5098
1894	513	4388	76	224075	37	47330	52	24466	83	3095	5323
1895	512	4560	78	233050	38	48575	51	24607	93	3429	5482
1896	481	4610	84	249050	38	50800	57	26694	92	3349	5643
1897	494	4989	84	248900	41	59500	59	26643	88	3134	5740
1898	470	4731	87	256163	41	60300	62	26753	89	3316	5963
1899	456	4707	89	255375	41	61200	65	26554	88	3178	7335
1900	376	4640	91	262925	44	53650	66	27467	87	3378	7084
1901	397	4539	92	261025	47	66650	66	27274	80	3150	5825
1902	396	4704	93	268575	47	67000	68	29300	83	3373	5992
1903	371	4713	95	272725	48	70050	60	31242	85	3421	6413
1904	449	4840	95	274075	48	71800	60	32580	92	4470	6514
1905	331	4969	97	292775	49	77700	61	33300	85	3462	8563
1906	378	5102	99	316125	52	86850	63	34027	79	3336	12114
1907	399	5027	99	313500	50	87450	64	35565	72	3093	8953
1908	374	4892	93	349575	48	75900	61	36972	69	3972	10437
1909	313	4873	92	371050	49	79400	56	37275	74	3174	9894
1910	313	4984	94	341000	48	82600	56	35349	75	3025	10291
1911	291	5022	94	405400	49	87900	65	40469	74	3002	12045
1912	311	5048	96	407550	48	88800	67	40864	78	3018	11423
1913	313	4979	96	418100	52	102000	72	42869	80	4828	10764
1914	396	5016	95	428700	51	109500	75	43778	80	4884	11976
1915	339	4795	94	430200	50	108300	75	42071	79	5519	13117
1916	311	5101	91	420300	51	108300	72	43056	73	4392	13171
1917	327	5365	88	419300	51	108300	69	43491	71	5475	20239
1918	390	5381	88	413325	51	123015	68	45726	73	5400	22623
1919	301	5278	81	418150	50	121115	63	48820	67	5169	31719
1920	658	5356	81	500100	50	125900	62	53179	63	5132	39568
1921	486	5449	82	553000	50	134500	58	60746	60	5113	39906
1922	401	5291	81	559420	47	134450	57	60409	60	5093	34780
1923	376	5003	81	575200	49	176900	57	58283	64	4788	36757
1924	351	5092	78	586000	48	181200	59	62151	60	4694	31354
1925	310	4897	79	644100	49	191700	59	63943	65	4941	32827
1926	277	4845	75	652200	50	213200	61	63558	61	4699	28443
1927	282	5005	75	667100	50	222700	60	60955	58	4586	27748
1928	275	4890	72	669600	50	225000	60	63876	57	4464	27872
1929	353	4952	72	670600	50	225800	63	65113	57	4877	25701
1930	443	6340	85	996500	60	269900	67	85307	69	6270	38530
1931	416	6360	86	1004000	60	287100	67	83098	67	6188	32251
1932	343	6240	86	1018000	60	276900	70	75487	64	6373	24591
1933	378	5995	83	941900	61	277434	70	63739	65	6891	17165
1934	308	6125	83	953600	60	264134	68	62890	65	6577	18212
1935	268	6226	81	926400	60	255800	70	67076	65	6359	19563
1936	305	6262	82	948700	60	255500	69	70435	66	6387	20390
1937	265	6346	79	938900	57	198800	67	73382	61	5907	24646
1938	279	5790	77	859500	57	240700	63	72732	59	5765	24683
1939	195	6052	74	860050	55	228700	58	70984	58	5695	23184
1940	150	6088	72	823190	53	218600	43	71107	55	5579	23168
1941	163	5627	60	587550	44	170600	46	38452	55	4059	12029
1942	260	5205	60	587800	43	184100	45	39428	55	4105	19709
1943	229	4817	58	622900	43	188700	43	32148	55	3879	19953

(1) In full connection.

(2) Pastors, District Superintendents, Bishops and Conference Claimants.

# THE SALT OF THE EARTH

## PART X. CONFERENCE ROLL 1943

NAME	Born		Entered Conference		Rec'd in Nor.-Dan. Conf.*
	Where	When	Where	When	
Andreasen, Alex. ....	Sweden. ....	1859			1892
Gunderson, C. G. ....	Norway. ....	1866			1894
Knudsen, Lars C. ....	Norway. ....	1854			1886
Lorentz, John. ....	Norway. ....	1866			1891
Madsen, H. K. ....	Norway. ....	1870	Norway. ....	1895	1901
Munson, H. C. ....	Norway. ....	1860			1888
Effective					
Andersen, Alfred. ....	Norway. ....	1886			1924
Beckstrom, J. M. ....	Sweden. ....	1873			1904
Dahl, Ragnvald J. ....	Norway. ....	1889			1916
Eckhoff, Gustav A. ....	Norway. ....	1891			1925
Edwardsen, Erling C. ....	Norway. ....	1897			1922
Erickson, Edward. ....	America. ....	1877			1904
Evensen, Edward. ....	America. ....	1888			1911
Falck, Erling B. ....	Norway. ....	1902			1927
Firing, T. O. ....	Norway. ....	1890			1916
Folkestad, Halvard. ....	Norway. ....	1884			1909
Fosdal, Sigbjorn. ....	Norway. ....	1885			1910
Gilberts, Gilbert. ....	Norway. ....	1879			1918
Hammer, Sverre H. ....	Norway. ....	1900			1928
Hanson, Harry G. ....	Norway. ....	1902			1924
Helikson, Daniel. ....	Norway. ....	1888			1916
Helikson, David. ....	Norway. ....	1881			1918
Hjelmaas, Gerhard. ....	Norway. ....	1898			1927
Hofstad, Ottar. ....	Norway. ....	1885			1911
Kahrs, Oistein. ....	Norway. ....	1897			1923
Kleven, O. H. ....	America. ....	1906	Nor.-Dan. ....	1928	1940
Kvisgaard, Gustav. ....	Norway. ....	1883			1909
Kvisgaard, Olav A. ....	Norway. ....	1883			1911
Nelson, Gottfred. ....	Sweden. ....	1877	New York East. ....	1908	1919
Nilsen, Arne O. ....	Norway. ....	1906			1930
Nilsen, C. F. ....	Norway. ....	1875	Maine. ....	1909	1930
Paulson, Lee. ....	America. ....	1899			1925
Peterson, Harry M. ....	America. ....	1898			1924
Peterson, P. M. ....	Denmark. ....	1872			1900
Schevenius, C. W. ....	Norway. ....	1881			1906
Skagen, Jan O. B. ....	Norway. ....	1889			1915
Slaatte, Ivar T. ....	Norway. ....	1882			1909
Slaatte, Howard A. ....	America. ....	1919			1941
Smedstad, Asbjorn. ....	Norway. ....	1892	Philadelphia. ....	1921	1924
Stave, Andrew A. ....	Norway. ....	1894			1921
Wang, John J. ....	Norway. ....	1877			1909

On trial—Robert Lystad.

\* Pursuant to Conference action, Sept. 5, 1931, the last column of the Conference Roll designates the year of entrance on trial in place of change to full membership.



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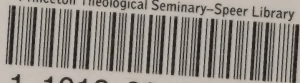




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